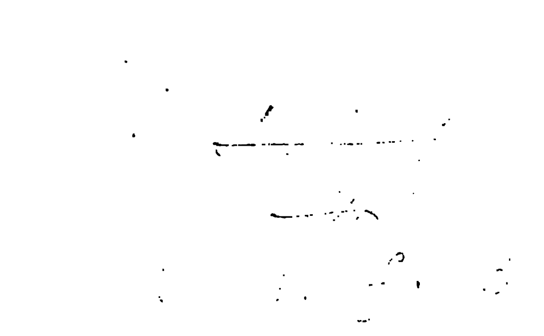
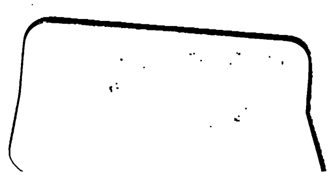










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GOETHE

IPHIGENIE AUF TAURIS

BUCHHEIM

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Oxford

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GERMAN CLASSICS

LESSING, GOETHE, SCHILLER

EDITED

WITH ENGLISH NOTES, ETC.

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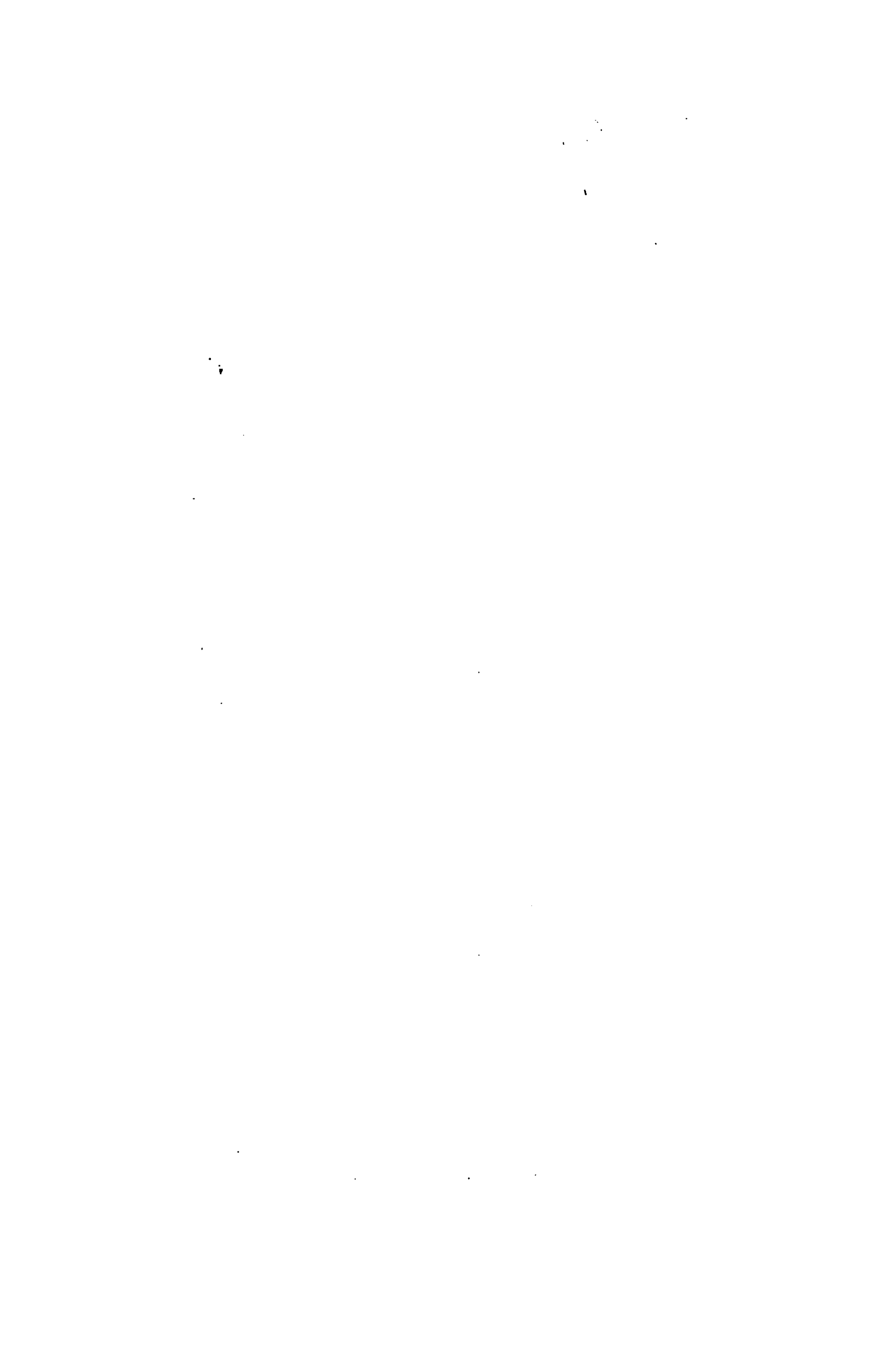
C. A. BUCHHEIM, PHIL. DOC., F.C.P.

PROFESSOR OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN
KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON
EXAMINER IN GERMAN TO THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

VOLUME V

Iphigenie auf Tauris, a Drama by Goethe

Oxford
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PREFACE.

AN eminent German critic once said, that Goethe's *Iphigenie* was 'the only poetical production in the literature of Germany nearly every line of which requires a full explanation; for whilst in his "Faust" there occur scenes and a number of passages which can be well understood without any further elucidation, such is not the case with his *Iphigenie*, which the reader cannot fully appreciate or thoroughly comprehend as a whole, unless he understands throughout the work every allusion, is familiar with all the parallel passages in the classical authors, and is, besides, enabled by a complete analysis to enter fully into the spirit of the noble production.' Admitting that opinion, the truth of which is generally acknowledged, it will readily be granted that a thorough and complete commentary on Goethe's *Iphigenie* is an absolute necessity for English readers of that drama. Guided by this fact, and by my own long experience as teacher in this country, I have explained and elucidated in my *Notes* every passage—nay, every single expression—which seemed to me to require elucidation and interpretation. I have also, from beginning to end, explained every mythological allusion, pointed out classical reminiscences, and quoted to the best of my knowledge parallel passages from the classical authors. Goethe's *Iphigenie* is the fruit of his classical readings, which he chiefly carried on with Herder, and there are therefore to be found in that drama numerous classical reminiscences, which can be traced not only to the Tauric Iphigenia of Euripides and other plays of that poet, but also to the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, treating of the kindred subject, and to Homer. The parallels are

frequently not actual adaptations, and offer, as it were, external similarities only; still I deemed them of sufficient interest to be embodied into a commentary on a work which is pervaded by the spirit of antiquity: for the same reason I could not help inserting *Notes* which will be found of interest to classical scholars only. In calling attention to reminiscences and parallel passages, I considered it advisable not only to give the references to the respective authors, but to quote bodily, for the convenience of the reader, the classical passages themselves—with very few exceptions—both in the original text and in an English translation. The translations, which have, of course, only been added for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with the language of the original, are given either in literal prose, or in such poetical versions as seemed to me most suitable for the purpose of elucidation. In the same way many explanations have been inserted in the commentary which are necessary only for such students as may not be familiar with the Greek Classics, and also a number of interpretations and help-notes for those readers who, though sufficiently acquainted with German in general, might find it hard to make out with perfect exactness this, the most difficult poetical production in German literature.

In order to make the present volume as complete in itself as possible, I have prefixed a *General Introduction*, giving a brief and succinct account of the house of the Atridae and their ancestors. This Introduction, which is designed for those who may not be fully acquainted with Greek mythology, will save some trouble even to those who have at their disposal the excellent English works of reference which have almost become 'household books,' and the mythological manuals and prose stories from the ancient Greek poets which have recently been published in this country.

The Critical Introduction consists of three Parts. The first gives the *History of the Composition*, the second a *Critical Analysis* of the drama and of the individual characters. The third Part contains chiefly a *Critical Estimate* of the relative merit and the respective tendencies of Goethe's *Iphigenie* and

the 'Iphigenia' of Euripides, which estimate will show that the two authors had quite different objects in view with their compositions; the Greek poet having written a play for a Greek audience, and the German poet having composed a drama in order to represent the *glorification of truth as embodied in a noble-minded woman.*

I have appended, as I did for the first time in this country in my edition of *Wilhelm Tell,* a List of more or less popular *Quotations* from the present drama; which, by the way, contains so many pithy sayings and aphorisms, that hundreds of lines might be used as quotations.

The German Text is given in a carefully revised form in accordance with the edition of 1825 mentioned in the Critical Introduction. For the Greek quotations from Euripides I have used the edition of Dindorf's text, published at the Clarendon Press; and for the quotations from the other Greek poets I have chiefly used the texts adopted by Professor Paley.

I have consulted for my Commentary the highly valuable *Erläuterungen* of Weber and Düntzer, and frequently quoted their remarks, more especially those of the latter commentator. Some remarks of Dr. Strehlke's have also been of use to me. In interpreting the *Text,* which frequently offers very great difficulties, I have amply availed myself of the Prose Versions in which Goethe first composed his *Iphigenie,* and which often served me as the surest guide in explaining the *Text,* whenever the wording was doubtful. In all such instances I thought it right to quote the corresponding prose passages in full.

For my 'Translation Notes' I have found considerable help in the admirable translation of the present drama by Miss Swanwick, and here and there in the renderings of William Taylor of Norwich. I must, however, most specially acknowledge—and I do so with a feeling of sincere gratitude—the help which I derived from my learned friend and colleague, Professor J. B. Mayor, who, though himself engaged on a learned work of considerable magnitude, kindly read through my *Notes* as they went through the press, and assisted me with some very valuable suggestions.

The subject of Iphigenia has of late been made popular in this country through some Essays and Monographs on the works of Euripides, and the recent discoveries at Mycenae have added fresh interest to the tale of the Atridae, and so it is to be hoped that the present edition of the drama will be welcome not only to classical scholars, but also to the generality of readers to whom I have endeavoured to make accessible one of the noblest productions of the great poet. I may add, that as this drama affords one of the purest readings in any literature, there certainly cannot be a more commendable text-book for school purposes. What Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* is to the less advanced readers of German, Goethe's *Iphigenie* is to those who have already acquired a good knowledge of the language; and with what delight and enthusiasm this drama is read by Englishmen and Englishwomen—when it is fully understood by them—I have had ample opportunities to convince myself.

Lessing says: *Seines Fleiszes darf sich Jeder rühmen*, and so I trust that I may be allowed to state that I have bestowed the greatest care and attention on the present edition of Goethe's great work, and that I have spared no study and research to make it generally popular in this country. Should I succeed in this object, I shall consider myself amply rewarded for my labour.

C. A. BUCHHEIM.

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON,
Jan. 1880.

CONTENTS.



GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

IPHIGENIA was the descendant of a race, which was one of the most ill-fated in the traditional history of Greece, and furnished the Greek tragic poets with abundant subjects for their tragedies. The founder, or ancestor of the race was *Tantalus*, the old representative of the highest good fortune and of the deepest and most sudden fall. He is described as the son of Zeus and Pluto (i.e. abundance), a daughter of Cronos, and as having associated with Zeus and the other gods; he also shared at their table nectar and ambrosia, and was entrusted with their secrets. Intoxicated by his lofty position Tantalus became overweening and offended the gods—some say by setting his own son before them at a repast to test their omniscience, or as others relate by abstracting nectar and ambrosia, i.e. by divulging the secrets of the gods to other mortal beings[1]—and in consequence he was visited after his death with that well-known terrible punishment of everlasting and never-gratified desire. He was doomed to stand in the midst of a lake, under trees covered with refreshing fruit, and both water and fruit got out of his reach, as soon as he attempted to quench his burning thirst. Others say he had a rock hanging over his head ever ready to fall. The theory that Tantalus was the sun, readily explains all these strange stories[2].

Tantalus had three children, the eldest of whom, called *Pelops*, became one of the most celebrated kings of ancient Greece. Pelops was one of the suitors of Hippodamia, the beautiful daughter of Oenomaus, king of Pisa in Elis. All her suitors had to compete in a chariot race with her father who, possessing

[1] According to Pindar, Tantalus gave *ambrosia* to other men, in order to impart to them the gift of immortality, which he himself then possessed.

[2] Compare Cox, Mythology of the Aryan nations.

very swift horses, easily defeated and subsequently killed them. Pelops, however, was so much bent on marrying Hippodamia that he had recourse to treachery. He bribed Myrtilus, the charioteer of Oenomaus, to tamper with his master's chariot, and when the race took place, the king was thrown out and killed on the spot. Pelops succeeded him in the sovereignty and married Hippodamia, but instead of fulfilling his promise to the charioteer he hurled him from a cliff into the sea. Myrtilus as he sank cursed Pelops and his whole race; and to that curse all the calamities which subsequently befell the house of the Pelopidae are frequently attributed. Pelops had one son, named Chrysippus, by the nymph Axioche, and a number of other children by Hippodamia, of whom Atreus and Thyestes became the most famous. Chrysippus was a favourite with his father on account of his great beauty, and his half-brothers Atreus and Thyestes killed him from envy. Pelops expelled the latter from the country, and Hippodamia, being suspected by her husband of having instigated her sons to commit the cruel deed, and dreading his vengeance, destroyed herself. Pelops—from whom the name of Peloponnesus is said to be derived—seems to have died peaceably, but his two sons, who had murdered the beautiful Chrysippus, were exposed to great calamities.

The two brothers *Atreus* and *Thyestes* fled to Mycenae, where they became the successors of Eurystheus; but Atreus, being in possession of 'a lamb with a golden fleece' secured the sovereignty of the kingdom to himself alone. Atreus had by his first wife, Cleola, a son named Pleisthenes, and by his second wife, Aëropé, several sons, the most celebrated of whom were Agamemnon and Menelaus. Aëropé was bribed to betray her husband to Thyestes, who by her assistance got possession of 'the lamb with the golden fleece,' the ancient symbol of sovereignty in general, and of the enormous riches of the Atridae in particular. Atreus, being thus injured in his honour, expelled Thyestes, who secretly carried off the child Pleisthenes, brought him up as his own son, and when he was grown up sent him to Mycenae to kill Atreus. The attempt failed and Pleisthenes was put to

death by the king, who found out too late that he had killed his own son. After some time Atreus pretended to be reconciled to his brother, and invited him to Mycenae. When Thyestes had arrived with his two or three sons, Atreus caused the latter to be murdered, and to be served up to his brother at a banquet. After the wretched father had partaken of the horrible food, and anxiously asked for his children, Atreus ordered the remains of the murdered sons to be brought in. Horror-stricken at the sight—from which the sun is said to have turned his face—Thyestes fled and cursed the house of Atreus. Subsequently Atreus was killed by Aegisthus, the son of Thyestes, and these two having succeeded in the sovereignty of Mycenae, expelled Agamemnon and Menelaus the sons of Atreus from the country.

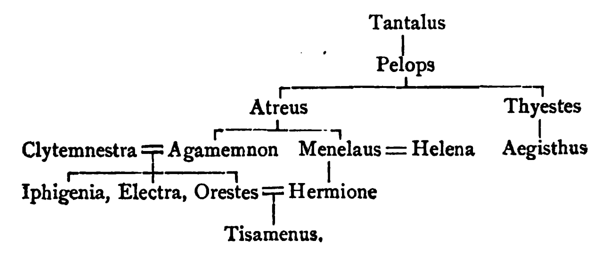
The two brothers went to Sparta, where Agamemnon married Clytemnestra, and Menelaus her sister Helena, daughters of king Tyndareus. In the course of time Agamemnon obtained possession of the kingdom of Mycenae, and became by Clytemnestra the father of four children; Electra, Chrysothemis, *Iphigenia*, and Orestes. His power and wealth became so great, that when the Greeks prepared the expedition against Troy, he was chosen chief commander, but when the Greek army and fleet were assembled at Aulis, ready to depart, they could not sail forth on account of adverse winds. The reason of the obstacle was explained by the seer Calchas. Agamemnon had offended Diana, by killing a stag in a grove sacred to her, and by speaking irreverently of the goddess—or, as some assert, by having vowed in the year of Iphigenia's birth to sacrifice 'whatsoever the year should bring forth most beautiful,' and having neglected to sacrifice his daughter, who was distinguished by great beauty. Calchas further declared that it was Diana who detained the fleet, and that the goddess could only be appeased by the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon. With reluctance the king consented, and enticed his daughter to the camp under pretence of wedding her to Achilles. Iphigenia came, together with her mother and her infant brother Orestes; and on discovering the deception she at first implored

her father to spare her, but finally resolved to die heroically for the benefit of the Greeks The maiden was conducted to the altar and when she was on the point of being sacrificed the goddess sent down a cloud, shrouding and carrying away the intended victim, and substituting in her place a hind, which was sacrificed. The Greeks imagined that Iphigenia had been sacrificed, but Diana had carried her away to the Tauric Chersonese, where she served in her temple as a priestess.

Agamemnon proceeded with the Greeks, who were now enabled to sail, to Troy, and Clytemnestra returned to Mycenae. There Aegisthus ingratiated himself with her, and having obtained entire control over her mind, he persuaded her to kill her husband—against whom he felt a deep resentment—on his return from Troy. When Agamemnon returned with the victorious army, and arrived at his 'father's halls' he was received with feigned affection by his treacherous wife. According to Grecian custom he at once took a bath, and, when on the point of leaving it he demanded a garment from Clytemnestra, she threw over him a net-like robe, which rendered him helpless, and slew him. Some relate, that Aegisthus merely devised the murder, and Clytemnestra carried it out alone; others say, that he actually assisted her in perpetrating the deed; whilst according to a third version (Od. xi. 409, etc.) he butchered the king and his followers at a banquet.

Electra who had been ill-treated by Aegisthus, whose authority she would not acknowledge, and by her own mother, now trembled for her own fate, but still more for that of *Orestes*, whom the guilty pair would fear as his father's future avenger. She, therefore, secretly sent her brother to Strophius, king of Phocis, who was married to a sister of Agamemnon. Orestes was brought up by his uncle together with his son Pylades and there sprang up between the two youths that intimate friendship which has become proverbial. The thought of avenging his father's death was, however, uppermost in the mind of Orestes and after having stayed for seven years at Phocis he repaired in company with his faithful Pylades, in disguise, to Mycenae. The two friends

announced the death of Orestes to Clytemnestra, and the unnatural mother, conscious that she deserved punishment at his hands, actually rejoiced at the tidings. Orestes was at first unwilling to avenge his father's death on his mother, but Electra, to whom he made himself known, fanned in him the flame of vengeance and both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus fell by his hand. Tormented by remorse, or as the Greeks expressed it 'pursued by the furies,' Orestes consulted the oracle of Apollo, which promised him recovery from his 'madness,' if he carried away from Tauris the image of Diana—which was said to have fallen there from heaven—and took it to Athens. Orestes went with Pylades to Tauris and being taken prisoners by the natives, the two friends were to be sacrificed, by command of king Thoas, according to the custom of the country. A recognition took place, however, between Orestes and his sister Iphigenia—who still served there as priestess—and the two left Tauris together with Pylades, carrying away with them the image of Diana. The curse which had rested on the house of Tantalus ceased with the return of Orestes and Iphigenia to Mycenae, 'the wonderful ruins of which still bear silent testimony to the splendour of the Atridae.' Orestes not only took possession of his father's kingdom, but of several other countries. He was married to Hermione by whom he had a son named Tisamenus, who, as will be seen from the following *Genealogical Table*, was the last of the Atridae.



CRITICAL INTRODUCTION.

I.

Next to a critical estimate of important poetical productions, there is nothing so interesting and instructive as the history of their composition, more especially if it serves to illustrate at the same time the obstacles encountered and triumphantly overcome by a man of genius, and help us to gain an insight into the process of the author's intellectual development. Such is undoubtedly the case with the history of the composition of Goethe's *Iphigenie*, concerning the origin, growth and completion of which abundant details are found in his correspondence and in his *Italienische Reise*.

Goethe seems to have conceived the idea of dramatising the subject of Iphigenia as far back as the year 1776, but he did not actually begin the composition until February 1779. He could not have undertaken the task at a less auspicious moment, for in the beginning of that year he was appointed 'President of the Military and Causeway Commissions' of the duchy of Weimar. The function of the poet-statesman was to superintend the levying of recruits and to watch over the repairs and construction of highways; and well might he exclaim that amidst these uncongenial occupations 'he was with one foot only in the stirrups of Pegasus.' Still he resolutely proceeded to his task on the evening of the fourteenth of February. A pleasant letter received from his mother had cheered his mind, and the 'depressing spirits' of official drudgery were driven away by the soothing sounds of music, which was performed in a room adjoining his study. The beginning had now been made; and, the most urgent official duties being accomplished, the poet retired, at the beginning of March, to the solitude of the castle of

Ilmenau, hoping to finish the drama in a few days. But an adverse fate threw a new difficulty in his way. A riot had broken out among the weavers of the neighbouring manufacturing town of Apolda, in consequence of great distress prevailing in that 'troublesome place.' This circumstance had a very disturbing effect on Goethe, and he bitterly complained 'that the drama would not advance, and that it was quite dreadful that the king of Tauris should speak as if there were no starving stocking-weavers at Apolda.' Returning to Weimar on March 11, he assiduously continued his work, and after a few days he had finished the first three acts. On March 19 he wrote the whole of the fourth act in one day, to judge from the following memorandum which he dictated to his secretary Riemer: '*Sereno die, quieta mente* I wrote after a choice of *three years* the fourth act of my Iphigenie in *one* day.' The remaining fifth act was written within the next nine days, so that the *first version* of the drama was finished on March 28 of the year 1779. The piece, composed within the short space of about six weeks, was, however, only finished but not completed; for it was written in prose—partly owing to the strange prejudice of those days that tragedies should not be written in verse, and partly to the fact that the laws of German prosody were then still unsettled. The prose was nevertheless so rhythmical, that it mostly read like verse; for in spite of the drawback just pointed out Goethe spontaneously produced the most finished verse.

After a space of nine days—on April 6—the drama was performed for the first time in honour of the birth-day of the Duchess Luise; the celebration of which seems to have been the external occasion for so speedily finishing the drama. The performance was merely a private one, and was carried out by amateurs only; the part of Iphigenia alone being played by a professional actress—the famous Corona Schröter. Goethe himself acted the part of Orestes; and all the records preserved of that memorable performance agree that at no time has there been witnessed such an union of intellectual and physical perfection as was exhibited by Goethe in playing the part of Orestes. He

was likened to 'an Apollo descended from heaven, to represent bodily the beauty of Greece.'

The performance was repeated several times, and the author soon received from various quarters applications for his 'newest dramatic production'; but Goethe being fully conscious of the fact that his drama had not yet attained the right form, decidedly declined to have it published or performed.

In the spring of 1780 Goethe proceeded to change his first Prose Version into a metrical form, but the whole process seems to have consisted, in a great measure at least, in merely transcribing the rhythmical prose into irregular iambics. This second—poetical—version is, besides, merely a fragment, as it does not contain the whole drama. Of greater importance is the revision of the Prose Version which Goethe undertook in 1781. The dialogue was extended and a number of expressions replaced by more dignified ones. Five years later the author seems to have made another attempt to change the prose into a metrical form; for writing from Karlsbad under date of Aug. 23, 1786, he says, 'Now that the drama is shaped into verse, it gives me new pleasure; one can see much better what improvement is still required. I am now engaged on it, and hope to have done with the work to-morrow.' His friends had repeatedly urged him to give the final touch to his *Iphigenie*, and this was most assiduously done by Herder, who probably best knew how to appreciate the great classical work. Owing to these solicitations Goethe took with him, together with other unfinished productions, the last version of his drama, when he left Karlsbad on Sept. 4, 1786; and on the Brenner mountain, where he arrived four days later, he took out of a larger parcel of manuscripts that of his *Iphigenie*, 'that it might be his companion into the beautiful warm country.' 'The days are long,' he added; 'there will be nothing to disturb my thoughts, and the glorious objects of the surrounding scenery will by no means dispel the poetical inspiration; nay, assisted by open air and free exercise, they will rather promote it.' The fact is Goethe was now free from the shackles of social and conventional life, and was therefore in a position to follow the

impulse of his poetical genius. Four days after he had left the Brenner he wrote the first lines of his 'new version' on the Lake of Garda, when the powerful south winds drove the waves to the shore, 'where he was at least as lonely as his heroine on the coast of Tauris[1].' He continued the task of touching up his drama during his journey to Venice, and worked most industriously at the last-named place. Then the work suddenly came to a standstill, and he even conceived the idea of writing an *Iphigenie von Delphi*[2]; fortunately 'a feeling of duty towards the older piece' induced him, on his arrival at Rome, to devote himself again to the task of recasting entirely the form of his *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, and this time he was to derive considerable aid from another quarter. He had made at Rome the acquaintance of the somewhat eccentric but ingenious writer R. P. Moritz (1757—93), who was the author of a treatise on German prosody; and by imparting to Goethe his views on that subject, he gave a new impetus to the poet to complete the task of changing the prose form of his drama into the purest iambics of five feet[3]. 'My proceeding,' says Goethe, 'was very simple; I merely copied the piece, dividing it line by line, period by period into a regular rhythm.'

Those who will compare the prose with the poetic version, will readily convince themselves of the truth of that statement; for as the late G. H. Lewes truly remarks 'they will not only see how frequent the verses are, but how few were the alterations necessary to transform the prose drama into a poem. They are just the sort of touches which elevate poetry above prose[4].' The final classic stamp having been impressed by Goethe on his *Iphigenie*, he was in a position to send to Germany on Jan. 10,

[1] Cp. *Note* to ll. 13, 14.

[2] A sketch of Goethe's plan is given in his *Italienische Reise* under date of Bologna, 19th Oct., 1786.

[3] An account of Goethe's intercourse with Moritz, and of the aid he received from him, will be found in the *Italienische Reise* in the letters dated Rome Dec. 1786 and Jan. 1787.

[4] The two Prose Versions and the fragmentary Poetic Version will be found in Düntzer's instructive and exhaustive work, *Die drei ältesten Bearbeitungen von Goethe's Iphigenie*.

1787, a copy of the *new version* of his drama, which he called his *Schmerzenskind*—an epithet, as he declared, which it deserved in more than one sense. This then is the *last version* of Goethe's *Iphigenie* as it now lies before us—in a form which, in point of language alone, presents the purest and most perfect production of German literature.

II.

A considerable amount of ingenuity and learning has been displayed by various critics in discussing the questions: What object had Goethe in view in selecting a classical subject for dramatization? What 'moral' did he intend to convey? Is it a modern specimen of Greek tragedy, or is it a purely modern drama? These questions have generally been answered in accordance with the individual standpoint of the critics, without paying much attention to the internal evidence to be derived from the various stages of the poet's intellectual development, and to his own utterances respecting his most matured production.

It has been repeatedly pointed out, that the demoniac, or rather Titanic element was in a considerable degree represented in Goethe's nature, as may be inferred, in particular, from a number of his works. His *Faust*, his *Prometheus*—not to mention any other of his larger or minor productions—are all emanations from that unsubmissive spirit. A significant passage in the fifteenth book of his *Wahrheit und Dichtung* gives us a sufficient clue as to the extent of that spirit in the poet and its relation to his works: 'The Titano-gigantic, heaven-storming spirit,' says Goethe, 'did not furnish any materials to my poetic direction. It was more in my line to represent that peaceful, plastic, at any rate passive resistance, which, whilst acknowledging a superior authority wishes to be placed on an equal footing with the same. But also the bolder characters of that race, Tantalus, Ixion, Sisyphus were adored by me. Admitted into the society of the gods, *they* may not have behaved in a sufficiently submissive manner,

and as haughty guests they may have deserved the wrath of their friendly host and thus have drawn banishment upon themselves. I pitied them; the ancients had already acknowledged their state as a tragic one, and if I showed them in the background of my *Iphigenie* as members of an enormous opposition, I probably owe to them a part of the effect, which it was the good fortune of that piece to produce.' Here then we have the answer to the question why Goethe has chosen the story of Iphigenia as the subject of a drama. Not because it was a classical subject, but because it represented the sufferings of a high-minded, ambitious race. The curse lay heavily on the whole race, and one crime or wrong engendered another. How was that curse to be removed? Should it for ever continue, because the ancestors had deserved it? In this sense *Iphigenie* exclaims most pathetically (cp. p. 82, l. 1694, etc.):

Soll dieser Fluch denn ewig walten? Soll
Nie dies Geschlecht mit einem neuen Segen
Sich wieder heben?—Nimmt doch Alles ab!
Das beste Glück, des Lebens schönste Kraft
Ermattet endlich, warum nicht der Fluch?

Besides, however, representing to us in the background the sufferings of the 'bolder characters' and the curse which weighed upon them and their descendants, the poet succeeds in exciting our pity for the various characters in the drama. First for Iphigenia, the innocently suffering maiden, who reluctantly spends her life amidst a barbarian people far from her kindred—then for the two noble friends, one of whom had been driven, as it were, to a crime, and in consequence was pursued by furies, whilst the other was a victim to his generous friendship. The climax of pity is, however, reached in the scene in which the recognition between brother and sister takes place—when Iphigenia in deep distress appeals to the former:

Schilt einer Schwester reine Himmelsfreude
Nicht unbesonnene, strafbare Lust;

and Orestes, dimly recognizing his sister, exclaims in despair, 'that he only wished their sister Electra might be there, so that

she should perish with them, and the sun should see the last horrors of their race, in beholding a sister sacrificing her brother' (p. 59, l. 1223, etc.).

Crushed by the thought of those 'last horrors' Orestes sinks down exhausted, and he again excites our pity when, on regaining his consciousness, he has a vision of 'calm frenzy' and Iphigenia implores the goddess:

O lasz den Einz'gen, Spätgefundnen mir
Nicht in der Finsternisz des Wahnsinns rasen!

The sudden and complete recovery of Orestes is brought about by his recognition of his sister, as is shewn by his words:

Lasz mich zum erstenmal mit freiem Herzen
In deinen Armen reine Freude haben!
* * * * *
Es löset sich der Fluch, mir sagt's das Herz.

The recovery of Orestes, effected by the calming influence of Iphigenia, constitutes, however, only half of the task to be accomplished. There still remains that of 'purifying the house of Agamemnon,' and this too is effected by Iphigenia through the purity of her heart. We had already learnt to admire her humanising influence in the abolition, through her agency, of the human sacrifices in Tauris, and now, when a conflict arises in her heart between sisterly love and half-filial gratitude—between falsehood palliated by the law of self-preservation and all-powerful eternal truth—she triumphantly overcomes all worldly considerations and sacrifices all human interests on the altar of divine truth. Deceit and cunning were not only alien, but actually revolting to her; and when she has in the candour of her soul betrayed the secret plot to the king, he is so deeply touched by her confession, that he consents not only to the departure of the two friends, but also of her whom he hoped 'to carry to his home as bride, a blessing to himself and his realm.' It was then by the return of Iphigenia to the 'halls of her ancestors'—which was brought about by the truthfulness and purity of her heart—that the curse was removed from her house. The 'moral of the drama' is, therefore, nothing else but the *glorification of truth, bodily represented,*

in its highest perfection, in an innocent woman. That Goethe wished to show by his drama that *purity of heart* alone can atone for all human frailties and blot out past crimes, he has himself declared in the following lines, written in 1827, with respect to the present drama[1]:

> *Was der Dichter diesem Bande*
> *Glaubend, hoffend anvertraut,*
> *Werd' im Kreise deutscher Lande*
> *Durch des Künstlers Worte laut.*
> *So im Handeln, so im Sprechen*
> *Liebevoll verkünd' es weit:*
> *Alle menschliche Gebrechen*
> *Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit.*

If then Goethe's object was to show the triumph of civilisation over barbarism, and of truth over falsehood, or as the learned French translator of Goethe's *Iphigenie*, M. Legrelle, expresses it, to produce in Iphigenie *un type éternel et suprème de perfection idéale*, can we suppose him to have aimed at constructing a Greek drama corresponding to the tragedies of the ancient Greek poets? Certainly not. All he did was to choose a classical subject which seemed to him most suitable as the background for a picture of human perfection, and in doing this he merely borrowed as much from the classical drapery for his picture as was actually necessary for the consistent execution of the work, and the representation of the characters respectively. There is not a single expression in the whole drama which—apart from many lofty sentiments quite unknown to the ancient world—would remind us that we read a modern production; whilst, on the other hand, there is no single trait in the piece, which would impose upon us the acceptance of facts based upon the religious belief of the ancients, but quite incompatible with our modern views. We

[1] After Eckermann had highly praised the performance of the part of Orestes by the actor Krüger, Goethe presented to the latter a handsomely bound copy of his *Iphigenie*, in which he had inscribed the above verses. Cp. Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe*, iii. 95, etc.

hear the complaints of Orestes that he is tormented by the furies, and see him suffering; but we do not behold the furies themselves. The bodily appearance of the avenging deities on the stage, was in its proper place before an audience in ancient Greece, whilst to admit it into a modern drama would be most unsuitable[1]. Goethe was therefore quite right in rejecting the suggestion of Schiller, who was fond of theatrical effect, to let the furies appear on the stage. He did not wish to imitate the ancient Greek tragic poets by having recourse to any external accessories which were peculiar to Greece only. If there is anything Greek in his drama besides the subject, it is the harmonious beauty of the piece as a whole, the calm dignity which pervades the action, and the unsurpassed majesty of the language.

It is true there is not much action, in the usual acceptance of the word, to be found in the drama; still the characters are, one and all, distinctly and interestingly delineated, and bear the stamp of individuality. The character of the king—who has been, of course, greatly idealised,—is at once dignified and majestic. We learn to appreciate his noble qualities at the very outset of the drama through Iphigenia, who describes him as *ein edler Mann*, and through her dialogue with his faithful servant Arkas. When Thoas himself appears, we cannot deny him our tribute of admiration for his dignified bearing, and our sympathy for his loneliness and his unsuccessful wooing. That his feelings of humanity are stifled in him for a moment, and that he should address bitter reproaches to Iphigenia on 'woman's nature,' is, under the circumstances, quite natural. The second time when the king appears—in the fifth act—we see him first represented as a man of great energy, prompt in command and ready in action. In thus depicting the character of the king, Goethe has happily applied a trait denoted by his name. Euripides describes him 'as a barbarian who moves his feet like swift wings,

[1] The furies appear in the celebrated opera by Gluck, composed in 1779 to a libretto by M. Guillard.

and to whom his swiftness has given the name of *Thoas*' (Iph. Taur. l. 32, etc.)[1], and Goethe puts into his mouth the words:

Es komme schnell die Priesterin herbei!
Dann geht, durchsucht das Ufer scharf und schnell.

At the same time the king is represented as a man of valour, moderation and sterling honesty. He subdues his anger in the presence of the fiery youth Orestes, but is ready to take up the single combat with him; and when he is reminded by Iphigenia of his promise and she appeals to his nobler feelings, he sternly but graciously grants her prayer.

The king's servant and confidant, *Arkas*, worthily represents his master and reflects his good qualities. He earnestly pleads his cause with Iphigenia, for whom he seems to entertain feelings of reverence and friendship. There is also a touch of humanity in his character, and he is brave and prompt in his actions like his royal master.

The bright character of *Pylades* affords a pleasant relief against his stern surroundings. Undaunted by any calamity, shrewd and brave, he is a perfect counterpart of Odysseus. He is in fact a genuine Greek character. What can there be more characteristic of an unflinching character than his assurance to Orestes:

Wenn die Priesterin
Schon, unsere Locken weihend abzuschneiden,
Die Hand erhebt, soll dein' und meine Rettung
Mein einziger Gedanke sein.

He had enlivened the gloomy mood of his friend (cp. l. 643, etc.), to whom he was attached with unparalleled devotedness, he had deceived the priestess with a 'cunningly devised story;' but with all his liveliness and shrewdness he is brave and thoughtful, for as Iphigenia says:

Er ist der Arm des Jünglings in der Schlacht,
Des Greises leuchtend Aug' in der Versammlung.

The character of *Orestes* can be properly defined from the moment of his recovery only. As long as he is under the bane of

[1] 'Thoos' denotes in Greek 'quick,' 'swift.'

remorse his soul is wrapped in deep melancholy. He is resigned to his fate and ready to die; but the spirit of heroism has not been entirely crushed in him. He still thinks with longing and regret of the bygone days, when he hoped to emulate the deeds of Theseus and Hercules, and the love of truth is still paramount in him; for when he finds that Iphigenia readily believed the 'fable' of Pylades, he confesses who he is, for he cannot bear to deceive such a noble soul by falsehood (cp. l. 1076, etc.). When he dimly begins to become conscious of the truth of Iphigenia's assurance that she is his sister, he manifests the most tender feelings of brotherly affection. How touching are his words to Iphigenia, when he comforts her to bear up under the new and last calamity:

Weine nicht! Du hast nicht Schuld.
Seit meinen ersten Jahren hab' ich nichts
Geliebt, wie ich dich lieben könnte, Schwester.

After his recovery Orestes appears in all the brightness of a young hero. From the speeches of Pylades (p. 75, etc.), we at once infer that a complete change has taken place in him, and that he is now like a new-born man; whilst when he appears armed (Act v. Sc. 4) we see bodily before us the valorous youth who is not even intimidated by the presence of the king. His bearing is at once royal, dignified and courageous; and it is a fine trait in his heroic character, that with the love of life there was aroused in him the love of action, and that he, as a stranger, was ready for a contest on behalf of all the strangers who may in future approach the shore of Tauris.

The character of *Iphigenie* is acknowledged to be one of the noblest that have ever been drawn by the master-hand of any poet. 'As a woman, as a daughter and sister, as a Greek and a priestess,' she is the embodiment of all ideal perfection, and her character stands before us in such harmonious beauty and completeness, that it would be just as difficult to describe it, as it is to give an exact idea in words of a beautiful work of art. The tender feeling for her kindred, the grateful sentiment towards her benefactor, the sense of duty in her function as priestess, are

all strongly developed in her, but her truthfulness is paramount to everything else. What we most admire in *Iphigenie* is her clear and distinct perception of what is right, and her unalterable resolution only to do what she acknowledges as such. She must be all at one with her consciousness of what is right and good, if she is to be satisfied with herself; and in this sense she utters the words which give a clue to her whole character:

Ganz unbefleckt genieszt sich nur das Herz.

It has been conjectured that the famous Frau von Stein, who had such great influence on Goethe, was the prototype of his Iphigenie; it is, however, not impossible that it was his own sister Cornelia, for whom he felt such a deep, brotherly affection, who had inspired him to erect this imperishable monument to brotherly and sisterly love.

III.

'How many *Iphigenias* have been written! Yet they all differ from each other, for every writer manages the subject after his own fashion.' This remark of Goethe's should serve us as a guide in judging the numerous dramatisations of the subject of Iphigenia, from the time of Euripides down to that of Goethe himself; and it should, besides, completely settle the vexed question, which properly ought never to have been raised, Which production was superior, the Greek play, or the German drama?

An account of the various Iphigenias that have ever been written, would, of course, be beyond the scope of the present publication, but a brief summary of the Euripidean play—for the benefit of those who may not be acquainted with the drama itself—seems to be so much the more desirable, because it will clearly show the inexpediency of drawing a parallel between the two Iphigenias, as if they had been written for the same object.

The play of Euripides opens with a prologue composed after the author's usual fashion. Iphigenia first gives a genealogical

account of her family, and after relating her own fate she describes a dream she had during the past night, which she can only interpret as a sure omen of the death of her brother Orestes. She prepares, therefore, with the help of her Grecian attendants —consisting of female slaves, who form the Chorus—to carry funeral libations to her brother's shades. After Iphigenia has left, Orestes and Pylades appear 'to make a stealthy survey of the temple,' from which they intend to carry away secretly the statue of Artemis; for Orestes had been promised release from the furies, if he brought that statue to Athens. They retire with the intention of carrying out their design at night time. Iphigenia again appears on the stage, and joins the Chorus in singing a dirge. The dirge ended, a herdsman announces to her the capture of two Grecian strangers. She is asked to make immediate preparations for sacrificing them. Hitherto she was, as she herself declares, averse from carrying out the cruel law of the land; but now, hardened by the assumed death of Orestes, and by the remembrance of the wrong done to her at Aulis, she feels no pity for her captive compatriots, and only wishes that Helen and Menelaus might be thrown on the coast of Tauris, so that she could immolate them. When the two captives, of whom she only knows that one was called Pylades, are brought as victims before Iphigenia, she gradually learns from them the events which occurred since she left Argos, such as the capture of Troy, the safe return of Menelaus and Helen, the murder of her father Agamemnon by Clytemnestra, and the death of the latter by her own son. Orestes persistently refused to give his name, in order not to expose it to disgrace; and after Iphigenia had learnt from his account that her brother was still alive, she hits upon the following idea. She declares herself willing to spare the life of that one of the two captives, who will undertake to deliver a letter to her brother Orestes, and here occurs that well-known contest in generosity between the two friends, each of whom wishes the other to save himself by carrying out the commission of the priestess. At last Pylades is prevailed upon to accept the offer, and he swears an oath that he will safely deliver the letter to

Orestes. By way of caution he adds, however, the saving clause, that in case the ship should wreck, and the missive be lost, he should no longer be responsible for the fulfilment of his oath. This observation causes Iphigenia to read aloud the letter, in which she relates her rescue at Aulis, and conjures her brother to save her. Pylades hereupon exclaims, that he can at once accomplish his oath, and delivers the letter to Orestes. The recognition between brother and sister now takes place, and a plan is projected to effect escape for all, and to convey away at the same time the statue of Diana. 'This affords,' as Professor Paley expresses it 'abundant scope for the Greek arts of fraud and deception.' Thoas, the king of Tauris, is both a devout and credulous man, and he is easily persuaded by the priestess that the captives require lustration, in consequence of being guilty of the crime of matricide, and that the statue too must be purified by the water of the sea. The priestess retires with the two strangers and the image of the goddess to 'a lonely part of the sea-shore,' but finally the fraud is discovered, and Thoas is resolved to take summary vengeance. Nothing can now save the two friends and the priestess, except the expedient, to which Euripides had so often recourse, namely, the apparition of Pallas Athene, who commands the frightened king to allow both the priestess and Orestes to depart from Tauris, and to carry away with them the statue of Diana to Attica.

The above brief summary of the Euripidean Tauric Iphigenia will clearly show what has been pointed out before, that Goethe had in his *Iphigenie* no intention whatever to produce an *imitation* of the Greek play; that he did not wish to write any Greek play at all, in the usual acceptance of that term; and that the essential character of the two productions in question is so widely different, that every parallel is quite out of place. The two pieces could, if I may say so, only be contrasted, not compared. Let us first consider the corresponding characters individually.

The Iphigenia of Euripides is a vindictive, scheming, and lying Greek woman. The mildness of her heart, which she herself praises so much, did not extend beyond the fact that she

awarded to the victims a tear of pity when they happened to be her compatriots (l. 344, etc.); but she nevertheless continued to 'consecrate' them as well as other strangers for immolation on the altar; and she only regrets that she was unable to wreak her vengeance on Helen and Menelaus (l. 354, etc.). She rejoices at the news of the death of the seer Calchas, and wishes death to Agamemnon (l. 531, etc.). She is ready to betray her host without the slightest remorse; she does not hesitate to tell him the shocking lie, that her father 'was still alive and fares well,' and assures him that she will not return to Greece, as she hates and detests that country (l. 1185, etc.); and finally she dupes him with the ridiculous nursery tale, that the image of the Goddess had turned away from its seat of its own accord, and had closed its eyes when the two strangers were brought to the temple (l. 1165, etc.). Almost the only redeeming trait in the character of the Euripidean Iphigenia, is her objection to the proposal that Orestes should kill the king, because a stranger should not murder his host (l. 1021). Her love for her kindred is certainly touching; but such love is only based on the ordinary feelings of humanity, and does not testify to any noble sentiments.

How different is the character of Goethe's *Iphigenie*! The ideal of truthfulness and gratitude, she is led away for a single moment only to tell the king an untruth; but soon the heroic resolve rises in her breast, rather to sacrifice all than tell a falsehood and deceive her benefactor.

The character of Orestes is also rather ignobly conceived by Euripides. He would rather flee than risk his life (l. 102, etc), and he is ready to murder the king of the country; and when his sister observes, 'that she will make use of his ravings as a contrivance,' he makes the commonplace remark, 'that women are always cunning to find out tricks' (l. 1032, etc.).

With Goethe, however, the character of Orestes appears in every respect in a nobler light. We sympathize with his sufferings, and we admire his truthfulness, which becomes the means of his ultimate recovery.

The character of Pylades is represented in a better light by

Euripides than that of Orestes; but after all he consents to save himself, and to leave his unfortunate friend behind to die; nor does he possess that bright cheerfulness with which Goethe has invested his character.

The king is represented by Euripides as a credulous and superstitious tyrant, at whose deception we smile; whilst with Goethe he appears as a royal warrior, full of dignity and stern manliness, whose character is raised in our estimation by his calm, though deep, affection for Iphigenia. The characters of the 'herdsman' and the 'messenger' are with Euripides, in accordance with the exigencies of the play, insignificant; whilst Arkas, who performs in the plot of Goethe's drama the function of those two personages, is of a superior stamp.

The difference in the general plots of the two Iphigenias need not further be pointed out; but it should be remembered, that, whilst the main point with Euripides turns on the actual possession of the image of Artemis—which is, of course, quite in accordance with the religious belief of the ancients—the essence of Goethe's drama consists in the return of Iphigenia, which is delayed to the end on account of the dubious wording of the oracle, and which is brought about by her truthfulness[1]. Thus the solution of the plot, which is effected by Euripides through the convenient contrivance of a *deus ex machinâ*, is achieved by Goethe through the natural sequence of noble actions.

The scene of recognition is, considered from the point of view of Goethe in writing the drama, also superior in the German *Iphigenie*. The recognition simply takes place in consequence of the reluctance of Orestes to tell a falsehood in the saintly pre-

[1] 'Id enim tragoedias illas inter se comparanti ante omnia tenendum est, Euripidem necessario curare debuisse, ut non solum Iphigenia e Taurica abduceretur, sed asportaretur etiam simulacrum Dianae. . . . Goethio vero licebat in solo Iphigeniae reditu consistere, qumque, si statua illa maneret apud Tauros, ea ipsa re solvi nodum posse intelligeret, ad id ambiguitate oraculi, sororem reduci jubente Apolline, potuit uti.' Gottfried Hermann's 'Preface' to 'Euripidis Iphigenia Taurica.'

sence of Iphigenia; and thus it is quite consistent with the tendency of the drama. The expedient to which Euripides had recourse, namely, to bring about the recognition by means of the letter, has been characterized by many as ludicrous; but here we should remember, that the 'contemporaries and epigones' of the Greek poet must have considered that expedient as both natural and ingenious; for even Aristotle places it above all other expedients for effecting the recognition[1].

It having been shown that the single elements in the two dramas form such striking contrasts, it seems unnecessary to say anything more on the inexpediency of drawing a parallel between the two Iphigenias as dramatic productions. Euripides wrote a realistic play and Goethe composed an idealistic drama. The former merely wished to produce a national or popular play, —half pathetic and half humorous—and his characters are therefore more life-like, more real. The Greek audience probably heartily enjoyed the scene, in which Thoas is befooled by the priestess, and they fully recognised their own countrymen in the doings and sayings of Orestes, Pylades, and Iphigenia. Goethe himself said that his Thoas was not historical; and it is more than probable that a Scythian king was more of the stamp of the Euripidean play. Goethe also well knew that *his* 'Iphigenie' never existed, but he selected the heroine of the beautiful Greek fable, as the most suitable to represent an ideal perfection personified in a woman.

The two poets having had different objects in view in composing their dramas—the one writing for a Greek audience who wished to be entertained, and the other for readers whose sentiments he was anxious to ennoble—it naturally follows that the treatment of the two productions must be totally different, if not actually contrasting. I will not go so far as to call the drama of Euripides 'a glorification of falsehood,' but I entirely concur in the opinion that Goethe's *Iphigenie* is the 'glorification of truth,' and that from an *ethical* point of view the German Iphigenie is

[1] Cp. Arist. Poetica, xvi. § 1–5.

just as superior to the Greek 'Iphigenia' as the modern code of morality is superior to the ancient [1].

It need hardly be pointed out, that the opinion here put forward is not given in a disparaging spirit against the Greek poet. His Tauric Iphigenia is certainly in its way a remarkable play; and it has, besides, the merit of having suggested to Goethe the composition of one of the purest productions ever written, and—barring the tendency and loftiness of conception of Goethe's *Iphigenie*—I quite agree with the remark, 'that both poems stand side by side as master-works of equal value, in spite, or rather on account of their diametrical contrasts; and that only one-sided narrowness can raise the one at the expense of the other [2].'

Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* did not 'take the world by storm' in the same way as his *Werther* did, and partly also his *Götz von Berlichingen.* It is true the enlightened circle of his Weimar friends was delighted with the drama, even in its first imperfect form; but when he read the last finished version to the German artists at Rome, they felt disappointed at the calm tenour of the work. They had expected, as the author himself declared, 'something tempestuous in the Berlichingen style.' Gradually only the world began to appreciate fully the master-work, for which the generality of readers seemed not to be ripe at the time of its appearance. The admiration for this drama spread so steadily and universally at home, that in the year 1825, when the fiftieth anniversary of the poet's arrival at Weimar was celebrated by the whole duchy, a special performance of his *Iphigenie* took place in the evening of his *Goldner Jubeltag*, and a new

[1] Hermann says in his above-mentioned Preface of Goethe that 'ita ille Atheniensem poetam aemulatus, ut hominem natione Graecum, sed eum talem audire videamur, qui nostri aevi cultu eruditus non solum virtutis puriorem excelsioremque imaginem animo impressam habeat, sed etiam oblectandi materiam magis ex sententiarum vi et copia, quam ex verborum ornatu et varietate numerorum depromat.'

[2] Iphigenia in Taurien. Erklärt von Schöne und Köchly. Einleitung, p. 41.

handsome edition was published *Zur Feier des VII November* 1825.

A few years before, in 1818, Goethe had the gratification of seeing his work translated into modern Greek by Joannes Papadopulos, a young Greek student who had spent some time at Weimar. Goethe felt so delighted at seeing his drama in the modern Greek garment, that one cannot help regretting that the translation into ancient Greek appeared only after his death [1]. Goethe's drama was several times translated into Italian, among others by Andrea Maffei. There are also several French translations extant, the last being that by M. A. Legrelle, who has prefixed a short life of Goethe to his version, and an appreciative analysis of the drama. Goethe's *Iphigenie* has met in general with great favour in France, where the interest in the fable of Iphigenia had been aroused through Racine's 'Iphigénie en Aulide,' through Gluck's Operas on the two 'Iphigenias,' not to speak of several other Tauric Iphigenias [2]. In this country the drama was first made known in 1797, through the translation of William Taylor of Norwich. Since that time a number of English translations have appeared both in this country and America; the most successful of which is beyond doubt that by the distinguished Greek and German scholar, Miss Anna Swanwick. The high value of the drama has also been, in general, duly acknowledged by English classical scholars and critics, and the late Mr. G. H. Lewes, who devotes a whole chapter to the work, has

[1] The above mentioned translation is by Prof. Kock, and was published at Berlin, 1861. The following passage from the translator's Preface, in which he speaks of the cultivation of classical studies in our own days, will be of special interest to English classical scholars: 'Sunt tamen, qui veterum poetarum non solum lectione sed etiam imitatione hodie quoque delectantur: viget adhuc in Britannia, fidelissima horum studiorum nutrice et adiutrice, viget Oxonii et Cantabrigiae, locis omnium saeculorum fama celebratis,' etc.

[2] An account of the various dramatised Iphigenias will be found in M. Patin's well-known *Euripide*, which forms the third volume of his 'Etude sur les Tragiques Grecs.' The author has in his Analysis also some excellent remarks on Goethe's *Iphigenie*.

the following passage on it, which I cannot help quoting *in extenso*:

'It is a marvellous dramatic poem. The grand and solemn movement of its evolution responds to the large and simple ideas which it unfolds. Its calmness is majesty. In the limpid clearness of its language, the involved mental processes of the characters are as transparent as the operations of bees within a crystal hive; while the constant strain of high and lofty music which sounds through the poem makes the reader feel as if in a holy temple. And above all witcheries of detail there is the one capital witchery, belonging to Greek statues more than to any other works of human cunning, the perfect *unity* of impression produced by the whole, so that nothing in it seems *made*, but all to *grow*, nothing is superfluous, but all is in organic dependence, nothing is there for detached effect, but the whole is effect. The poem fills the mind; but beautiful as the separate passages are, admirers seldom think of passages, they think of the wondrous whole.'



Iphigenie auf Tauris.

Ein Schauspiel

von

Wolfgang von Goethe.

Personen.

Iphigenie.

Thoas, König der Taurier.

Orest.

Pylades.

Arkas.

Schauplatz: Hain vor Dianens Tempel.

ARGUMENT.

ACT I.

IPHIGENIA gives expression to the feelings of awe with which her abode inspires her, and to her intense longing for her native land. She ought to serve the goddess Diana from her own free will, and not because she was kept in sacred bondage. Iphigenia bewails the fate of woman, who is obliged to submit patiently to her fate; but she hopes in Diana, whom she supplicates to restore her to her kindred. (Sc. 1.)

Arkas announces to Iphigenia the arrival of the King, and whilst describing her beneficial influence on Thoas and on his people by inducing them to abrogate the ancient practice of human sacrifices, he implores her to meet in a friendly manner the intentions of the King, who cherishes the hope of an union with her. (Sc. 2.)

The King appears and expresses to Iphigenia the desire to lead her home as his bride. She declines the offer by an evasive answer, and Thoas declares, that, although the goddess has placed her in his hands, he will renounce his claims on the priestess, if a safe return to her kindred is in store for her. Iphigenia then discloses to the King her descent, and relates both the horrors perpetrated by her ancestors and the miraculous way in which she herself had escaped from death. The King still persists in his offer, and when Iphigenia again implores him to restore her to her kindred, he seems moodily to grant her request, but declares at the same time, that the ancient rite of sacrificing strangers who approach the shores

of his country, on the altar of Diana, must henceforth be resumed. Two strangers have been found concealed in the caverns of the shore. They will be sent to her and she is to perform her duty as priestess. (Sc. 3.)

When Iphigenia is left alone (Sc. 4) she invokes the goddess Diana, who had before saved her from death, to keep her hands pure from blood.

Erster Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Iphigenie.

Heraus in eure Schatten, rege Wipfel
Des alten, heil'gen, dichtbelaubten Haines,
Wie in der Göttin stilles Heiligthum,
Tret' ich noch jetzt mit schauderndem Gefühl,
Als wenn ich sie zum erstenmal beträte, 5
Und es gewöhnt sich nicht mein Geist hierher.
So manches Jahr bewahrt mich hier verborgen
Ein hoher Wille, dem ich mich ergebe;
Doch immer bin ich, wie im ersten, fremd.
Denn ach! mich trennt das Meer von den Geliebten, 10
Und an dem Ufer steh' ich lange Tage,
Das Land der Griechen mit der Seele suchend;
Und gegen meine Seufzer bringt die Welle
Nur dumpfe Töne brausend mir herüber.
Weh dem, der fern von Eltern und Geschwistern 15
Ein einsam Leben führt! Ihm zehrt der Gram
Das nächste Glück vor seinen Lippen weg.
Ihm schwärmen abwärts immer die Gedanken
Nach seines Vaters Hallen, wo die Sonne
Zuerst den Himmel vor ihm aufschloß, wo 20

Sich Mitgeborne spielend fest und fester
Mit sanften Banden an einander knüpften.
Ich rechte mit den Göttern nicht; allein
Der Frauen Zustand ist beklagenswerth.
Zu Haus und in dem Kriege herrscht der Mann, 25
Und in der Fremde weiß er sich zu helfen.
Ihn freuet der Besitz; ihn krönt der Sieg;
Ein ehrenvoller Tod ist ihm bereitet.
Wie enggebunden ist des Weibes Glück!
Schon einem rauhen Gatten zu gehorchen, 30
Ist Pflicht und Trost; wie elend, wenn sie gar
Ein feindlich Schicksal in die Ferne treibt!
So hält mich Thoas hier, ein edler Mann,
In ernsten, heil'gen Sklavenbanden fest.
O wie beschämt gesteh' ich, daß ich dir 35
Mit stillem Widerwillen diene, Göttin,
Dir meiner Retterin! Mein Leben sollte
Zu freiem Dienste dir gewidmet sein.
Auch hab' ich stets auf dich gehofft und hoffe
Noch jetzt auf dich, Diana, die du mich, 40
Des größten Königes verstoßne Tochter,
In deinen heil'gen, sanften Arm genommen.
Ja, Tochter Zeus', wenn du den hohen Mann,
Den du, die Tochter fordernd, ängstigtest,
Wenn du den göttergleichen Agamemnon, 45
Der dir sein Liebstes zum Altare brachte,
Von Troja's umgewandten Mauern rühmlich
Nach seinem Vaterland zurückbegleitet,
Die Gattin ihm, Elektren und den Sohn,
Die schönen Schätze, wohl erhalten hast, 50
So gieb auch mich den Meinen endlich wieder,

Und rette mich, die du vom Tod errettet,
Auch von dem Leben hier, dem zweiten Tode!

Zweiter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Arkas.

Arkas.

Der König sendet mich hierher und beut
Der Priesterin Dianens Gruß und Heil. 55
Dies ist der Tag, da Tauris seiner Göttin
Für wunderbare, neue Siege dankt.
Ich eile vor dem König und dem Heer,
Zu melden, daß er kommt und daß es naht.

Iphigenie.

Wir sind bereit, sie würdig zu empfangen, 60
Und unsre Göttin sieht willkommnem Opfer
Von Thoas' Hand mit Gnadenblick entgegen.

Arkas.

O fänd' ich auch den Blick der Priesterin,
Der werthen, vielgeehrten, deinen Blick,
O heil'ge Jungfrau, heller, leuchtender, 65
Uns Allen gutes Zeichen! Noch bedeckt
Der Gram geheimnißvoll dein Innerstes;
Vergebens harren wir schon Jahre lang
Auf ein vertraulich Wort aus deiner Brust.
So lang' ich dich an dieser Stätte kenne, 70
Ist dies der Blick, vor dem ich immer schaudre;

Und wie mit Eisenbanden bleibt die Seele
Ins Innerste des Busens dir geschmiedet.

Iphigenie.

Wie's der Vertriebnen, der Verwaisten ziemt.

Arkas.

Scheinst du dir hier vertrieben und verwaist? 75

Iphigenie.

Kann uns zum Vaterland die Fremde werden?

Arkas.

Und dir ist fremd das Vaterland geworden.

Iphigenie.

Das ist's, warum mein blutend Herz nicht heilt.
In erster Jugend, da sich kaum die Seele
An Vater, Mutter und Geschwister band, 80
Die neuen Schößlinge, gesellt und lieblich,
Vom Fuß der alten Stämme himmelwärts
Zu dringen strebten, leider faßte da
Ein fremder Fluch mich an und trennte mich
Von den Geliebten, riß das schöne Band 85
Mit eh'rner Faust entzwei. Sie war dahin,
Der Jugend beste Freude, das Gedeihn
Der ersten Jahre. Selbst gerettet, war
Ich nur ein Schatten mir, und frische Lust
Des Lebens blüht in mir nicht wieder auf. 90

Arkas.

Wenn du dich so unglücklich nennen willst,
So darf ich dich auch wohl undankbar nennen.

Iphigenie.

Dank habt ihr stets.

Arkas.

Doch nicht den reinen Dank,
Um dessentwillen man die Wohlthat thut,
Den frohen Blick, der ein zufriednes Leben 95
Und ein geneigtes Herz dem Wirthe zeigt.
Als dich ein tief geheimnißvolles Schicksal
Vor so viel Jahren diesem Tempel brachte,
Kam Thoas dir, als einer Gottgegebnen,
Mit Ehrfurcht und mit Neigung zu begegnen, 100
Und dieses Ufer ward dir hold und freundlich,
Das jedem Fremden sonst voll Grausens war,
Weil Niemand unser Reich vor dir betrat,
Der an Dianens heil'gen Stufen nicht
Nach altem Brauch, ein blutig Opfer, fiel. 105

Iphigenie.

Frei athmen macht das Leben nicht allein.
Welch Leben ist's, das an der heil'gen Stätte,
Gleich einem Schatten um sein eigen Grab,
Ich nur vertrauern muß? Und nenn' ich das
Ein fröhlich, selbstbewußtes Leben, wenn 110
Uns jeder Tag, vergebens hingeträumt,
Zu jenen grauen Tagen vorbereitet,
Die an dem Ufer Lethe's, selbstvergessend,
Die Trauerschaar der Abgeschiednen feiert?
Ein unnütz Leben ist ein früher Tod; 115
Dies Frauenschicksal ist vor allen mein's.

Arkas.

Den edeln Stolz, daß du dir selbst nicht gnügest,
Verzeih' ich dir, so sehr ich dich bedaure;
Er raubet den Genuß des Lebens dir.
Du hast hier nichts gethan seit deiner Ankunft? 120
Wer hat des Königs trüben Sinn erheitert?
Wer hat den alten grausamen Gebrauch,
Daß am Altar Dianens jeder Fremde
Sein Leben blutend läßt, von Jahr zu Jahr,
Mit sanfter Ueberredung aufgehalten, 125
Und die Gefangnen vom gewissen Tod
Ins Vaterland so oft zurückgeschickt?
Hat nicht Diana, statt erzürnt zu sein,
Daß sie der blut'gen alten Opfer mangelt,
Dein sanft Gebet in reichem Maaß erhört? 130
Umschwebt mit frohem Fluge nicht der Sieg
Das Heer, und eilt er nicht sogar voraus?
Und fühlt nicht Jeglicher ein besser Loos,
Seitdem der König, der uns weis' und tapfer
So lang' geführet, nun sich auch der Milde 135
In deiner Gegenwart erfreut und uns
Des schweigenden Gehorsams Pflicht erleichtert?
Das nennst du unnütz, wenn von deinem Wesen
Auf Tausende herab ein Balsam träufelt?
Wenn du dem Volke, dem ein Gott dich brachte, 140
Des neuen Glückes ew'ge Quelle wirst,
Und an dem unwirthbaren Todesufer
Dem Fremden Heil und Rückkehr zubereitest?

Iphigenie.

Das Wenige verschwindet leicht dem Blick,
Der vorwärts sieht, wie viel noch übrig bleibt. 145

Arkas.

Doch lobst du den, der, was er thut, nicht schätzt?

Iphigenie.

Man tadelt den, der seine Thaten wägt.

Arkas.

Auch den, der wahren Werth zu stolz nicht achtet,
Wie den, der falschen Werth zu eitel hebt.
Glaub' mir und hör' auf eines Mannes Wort, 150
Der treu und redlich dir ergeben ist:
Wenn heut der König mit dir redet, so
Erleichtr' ihm, was er dir zu sagen denkt.

Iphigenie.

Du ängstest mich mit jedem guten Worte;
Oft wich ich seinem Antrag mühsam aus. 155

Arkas.

Bedenke, was du thust und was dir nützt!
Seitdem der König seinen Sohn verloren,
Vertraut er Wenigen der Seinen mehr,
Und diesen Wenigen nicht mehr wie sonst.
Mißgünstig sieht er jedes Edlen Sohn 160
Als seines Reiches Folger an, er fürchtet
Ein einsam, hilflos Alter, ja vielleicht
Verwegnen Aufstand und frühzeit'gen Tod.
Der Scythe setzt ins Reden keinen Vorzug,
Am wenigsten der König. Er, der nur 165
Gewohnt ist zu befehlen und zu thun,
Kennt nicht die Kunst, von Weitem ein Gespräch

Nach seiner Absicht langsam fein zu lenken.
Erschwer's ihm nicht durch ein rückhaltend Weigern,
Durch ein vorsätzlich Mißverstehen! Geh 170
Gefällig ihm den halben Weg entgegen!

Iphigenie.

Soll ich beschleunigen, was mich bedroht?

Arkas.

Willst du sein Werben eine Drohung nennen?

Iphigenie.

Es ist die schrecklichste von allen mir.

Arkas.

Gieb ihm für seine Neigung nur Vertraun! 175

Iphigenie.

Wenn er von Furcht erst meine Seele löst.

Arkas.

Warum verschweigst du deine Herkunft ihm?

Iphigenie.

Weil einer Priesterin Geheimniß ziemt.

Arkas.

Dem König sollte nichts Geheimniß sein!
Und ob er's gleich nicht fordert, fühlt er's doch, 180
Und fühlt es tief in seiner großen Seele,
Daß du sorgfältig dich vor ihm verwahrst.

Iphigenie.

Nährt er Verdruß und Unmuth gegen mich?

Arkas.

So scheint es fast. Zwar schweigt er auch von dir;
Doch haben hingeworfne Worte mich 185
Belehrt, daß seine Seele fest den Wunsch
Ergriffen hat, dich zu besitzen. Laß,
O überlaß ihn nicht sich selbst, damit
In seinem Busen nicht der Unmuth reife
Und dir Entsetzen bringe, du zu spät 190
An meinen treuen Rath mit Reue denkest!

Iphigenie.

Wie? Sinnt der König, was kein edler Mann,
Der seinen Namen liebt und dem Verehrung
Der Himmlischen den Busen bändiget,
Je denken sollte? Sinnt er vom Altar 195
Mich in sein Bette mit Gewalt zu ziehn?
So ruf' ich alle Götter und vor allen
Dianen, die entschloßne Göttin, an,
Die ihren Schutz der Priesterin gewiß,
Und Jungfrau einer Jungfrau gern gewährt. 200

Arkas.

Sei ruhig! Ein gewaltsam neues Blut
Treibt nicht den König, solche Jünglingsthat
Verwegen auszuüben. Wie er sinnt,
Befürcht' ich andern harten Schluß von ihm,
Den unaufhaltbar er vollenden wird; 205
Denn seine Seel' ist fest und unbeweglich.
Drum bitt' ich dich, vertrau' ihm, sei ihm dankbar,
Wenn du ihm weiter nichts gewähren kannst!

Iphigenie.

O sage, was dir weiter noch bekannt ist!

Arkas.

Erfahr's von ihm! Ich seh' den König kommen; 210
Du ehrst ihn, und dich heißt dein eigen Herz
Ihm freundlich und vertraulich zu begegnen.
Ein edler Mann wird durch ein gutes Wort
Der Frauen weit geführt. (Ab.)

Iphigenie (allein).

Zwar seh' ich nicht,
Wie ich dem Rath des Treuen folgen soll; 215
Doch folg' ich gern der Pflicht, dem Könige
Für seine Wohlthat gutes Wort zu geben,
Und wünsche mir, daß ich dem Mächtigen,
Was ihm gefällt, mit Wahrheit sagen möge.

Dritter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Thoas.

Iphigenie.

Mit königlichen Gütern segne dich 220
Die Göttin! Sie gewähre Sieg und Ruhm
Und Reichthum und das Wohl der Deinigen
Und jedes frommen Wunsches Fülle dir,
Daß, der du über Viele sorgend herrschest,
Du auch vor Vielen seltnes Glück genießest! 225

Thoas.

Zufrieden wär' ich, wenn mein Volk mich rühmte:
Was ich erwarb, genießen Andre mehr
Als ich. Der ist am glücklichsten, er sei
Ein König oder ein Geringer, dem
In seinem Hause Wohl bereitet ist. 230
Du nahmest Theil an meinen tiefen Schmerzen,
Als mir das Schwert der Feinde meinen Sohn,
Den letzten, besten, von der Seite riß.
So lang' die Rache meinen Geist besaß,
Empfand ich nicht die Oede meiner Wohnung; 235
Doch jetzt, da ich befriedigt wiederkehre,
Ihr Reich zerstört, mein Sohn gerochen ist,
Bleibt mir zu Hause nichts, das mich ergetze.
Der fröhliche Gehorsam, den ich sonst
Aus einem jeden Auge blicken sah, 240
Ist nun von Sorg' und Unmuth still gedämpft.
Ein Jeder sinnt, was künftig werden wird,
Und folgt dem Kinderlosen, weil er muß.
Nun komm' ich heut in diesen Tempel, den
Ich oft betrat, um Sieg zu bitten und 245
Für Sieg zu danken. Einen alten Wunsch
Trag' ich im Busen, der auch dir nicht fremd,
Noch unerwartet ist: Ich hoffe, dich,
Zum Segen meines Volks und mir zum Segen,
Als Braut in meine Wohnung einzuführen. 250

Iphigenie.

Der Unbekannten bietest du zu viel,
O König, an. Es steht die Flüchtige
Beschämt vor dir, die nichts an diesem Ufer
Als Schutz und Ruhe sucht, die du ihr gabst.

Thoas.

Daß du in das Geheimniß deiner Abkunft 255
Vor mir, wie vor dem Letzten, stets dich hüllest,
Wär' unter keinem Volke recht und gut.
Dies Ufer schreckt die Fremden: das Gesetz
Gebietet's und die Noth. Allein von dir,
Die jedes frommen Rechts genießt, ein wohl 260
Von uns empfangner Gast, nach eignem Sinn
Und Willen ihres Tages sich erfreut,
Von dir hofft' ich Vertrauen, das der Wirth
Für seine Treue wohl erwarten darf.

Iphigenie.

Verbarg ich meiner Eltern Namen und 265
Mein Haus, o König, war's Verlegenheit,
Nicht Mißtraun. Denn vielleicht, ach! wüßtest du,
Wer vor dir steht, und welch verwünschtes Haupt
Du nährst und schützest, ein Entsetzen faßte
Dein großes Herz mit seltnem Schauer an, 270
Und statt die Seite deines Thrones mir
Zu bieten, triebest du mich vor der Zeit
Aus deinem Reiche; stießest mich vielleicht,
Eh' zu den Meinen frohe Rückkehr mir
Und meiner Wand'rung Ende zugedacht ist, 275
Dem Elend zu, das jeden Schweifenden,
Von seinem Haus Vertriebnen überall
Mit kalter, fremder Schreckenshand erwartet.

Thoas.

Was auch der Rath der Götter mit dir sei,
Und was sie deinem Haus und dir gedenken, 280
So fehlt es doch, seitdem du bei uns wohnst

Und eines frommen Gastes Recht genießest,
An Segen nicht, der mir von oben kommt.
Ich möchte schwer zu überreden sein,
Daß ich an dir ein schuldvoll Haupt beschütze. 285

Iphigenie.

Dir bringt die Wohlthat Segen, nicht der Gast.

Thoas.

Was man Verruchten thut, wird nicht gesegnet.
Drum endige dein Schweigen und dein Weigern!
Es fordert dies kein ungerechter Mann.
Die Göttin übergab dich meinen Händen; 290
Wie du ihr heilig warst, so warst du's mir.
Auch sei ihr Wink noch künftig mein Gesetz:
Wenn du nach Hause Rückkehr hoffen kannst,
So sprech' ich dich von aller Fordrung los.
Doch ist der Weg auf ewig dir versperrt, 295
Und ist dein Stamm vertrieben oder durch
Ein ungeheures Unheil ausgelöscht,
So bist du mein durch mehr als Ein Gesetz.
Sprich offen, und du weißt, ich halte Wort.

Iphigenie.

Vom alten Bande löset ungern sich 300
Die Zunge los, ein langverschwiegenes
Geheimniß endlich zu entdecken; denn,
Einmal vertraut, verläßt es ohne Rückkehr
Des tiefen Herzens sichre Wohnung, schadet,
Wie es die Götter wollen, oder nützt. 305
Vernimm! Ich bin aus Tantalus' Geschlecht.

Thoas.

Du sprichst ein großes Wort gelassen aus.

Nennst du den deinen Ahnherrn, den die Welt
Als einen ehmals Hochbegnadigten
Der Götter kennt? Ist's jener Tantalus, 310
Den Jupiter zu Rath und Tafel zog,
An dessen alterfahrnen, vielen Sinn
Verknüpfenden Gesprächen Götter selbst,
Wie an Orakelsprüchen, sich ergetzten?

Iphigenie.

Er ist es; aber Götter sollten nicht 315
Mit Menschen wie mit ihres Gleichen wandeln;
Das sterbliche Geschlecht ist viel zu schwach,
In ungewohnter Höhe nicht zu schwindeln.
Unedel war er nicht und kein Verräther;
Allein zum Knecht zu groß, und zum Gesellen 320
Des großen Donnrers nur ein Mensch. So war
Auch sein Vergehen menschlich; ihr Gericht
War streng, und Dichter singen: Uebermuth
Und Untreu stürzten ihn von Jovis Tisch
Zur Schmach des alten Tartarus hinab. 325
Ach, und sein ganz Geschlecht trug ihren Haß.

Thoas.

Trug es die Schuld des Ahnherrn oder eigne?

Iphigenie.

Zwar die gewalt'ge Brust und der Titanen
Kraftvolles Mark war seiner Söhn' und Enkel
Gewisses Erbtheil; doch es schmiedete 330
Der Gott um ihre Stirn ein ehern Band;
Rath, Mäßigung und Weisheit und Geduld

Verbarg er ihrem scheuen, düstern Blick;
Zur Wuth ward ihnen jegliche Begier,
Und grenzenlos drang ihre Wuth umher. 335
Schon Pelops, der Gewaltigwollende,
Des Tantalus geliebter Sohn, erwarb
Sich durch Verrath und Mord das schönste Weib,
Oenomaus' Erzeugte, Hippodamien.
Sie bringt den Wünschen des Gemahls zwei Söhne, 340
Thyest und Atreus. Neidisch sehen sie
Des Vaters Liebe zu dem ersten Sohn,
Aus einem andern Bette wachsend, an.
Der Haß verbindet sie, und heimlich wagt
Das Paar im Brudermord die erste That. 345
Der Vater wähnet Hippodamien
Die Mörderin, und grimmig fordert er
Von ihr den Sohn zurück, und sie entleibt
Sich selbst—

Thoas.

Du schweigest? Fahre fort zu reden!
Laß dein Vertraun dich nicht gereuen! Sprich! 350

Iphigenie.

Wohl dem, der seiner Väter gern gedenkt,
Der froh von ihren Thaten, ihrer Größe
Den Hörer unterhält und, still sich freuend,
Ans Ende dieser schönen Reihe sich
Geschlossen sieht! Denn es erzeugt nicht gleich 355
Ein Haus den Halbgott noch das Ungeheuer;
Erst eine Reihe Böser oder Guter
Bringt endlich das Entsetzen, bringt die Freude
Der Welt hervor.—Nach ihres Vaters Tode

Gebieten Atreus und Thyest der Stadt, 360
Gemeinsam herrschend. Lange konnte nicht
Die Eintracht dauern. Bald entehrt Thyest
Des Bruders Bette. Rächend treibet Atreus
Ihn aus dem Reiche. Tückisch hatte schon
Thyest, auf schwere Thaten sinnend, lange 365
Dem Bruder einen Sohn entwandt und heimlich
Ihn als den seinen schmeichelnd auferzogen.
Dem füllet er die Brust mit Wuth und Rache
Und sendet ihn zur Königsstadt, daß er
Im Oheim seinen eignen Vater morde. 370
Des Jünglings Vorsatz wird entdeckt; der König
Straft grausam den gesandten Mörder, wähnend,
Er tödte seines Bruders Sohn. Zu spät
Erfährt er, wer vor seinen trunknen Augen
Gemartert stirbt; und die Begier der Rache 375
Aus seiner Brust zu tilgen, sinnt er still
Auf unerhörte That. Er scheint gelassen,
Gleichgültig und versöhnt, und lockt den Bruder
Mit seinen beiden Söhnen in das Reich
Zurück, ergreift die Knaben, schlachtet sie, 380
Und setzt die ekle, schaudervolle Speise
Dem Vater bei dem ersten Mahle vor.
Und da Thyest an seinem Fleische sich
Gesättigt, eine Wehmuth ihn ergreift,
Er nach den Kindern fragt, den Tritt, die Stimme 38
Der Knaben an des Saales Thüre schon
Zu hören glaubt, wirft Atreus grinsend
Ihm Haupt und Füße der Erschlagnen hin.—
Du wendest schaudernd dein Gesicht, o König!
So wendete die Sonn' ihr Antlitz weg 390

Und ihren Wagen aus dem ew'gen Gleise.
Dies sind die Ahnherrn deiner Priesterin;
Und viel unseliges Geschick der Männer,
Viel Thaten des verworrnen Sinnes deckt
Die Nacht mit schweren Fittigen und läßt 395
Uns nur die grauenvolle Dämmrung sehn.

Thoas.

Verbirg sie schweigend auch! Es sei genug
Der Gräuel! Sage nun, durch welch ein Wunder
Von diesem wilden Stamme du entsprangst.

Iphigenie.

Des Atreus ält'ster Sohn war Agamemnon; 400
Er ist mein Vater. Doch ich darf es sagen:
In ihm hab' ich seit meiner ersten Zeit
Ein Muster des vollkommnen Manns gesehn.
Ihm brachte Klytämnestra mich, den Erstling
Der Liebe, dann Elektren. Ruhig herrschte 405
Der König, und es war dem Hause Tantal's
Die lang entbehrte Rast gewährt. Allein
Es mangelte dem Glück der Eltern noch
Ein Sohn; und kaum war dieser Wunsch erfüllt,
Daß zwischen beiden Schwestern nun Orest, 410
Der Liebling, wuchs, als neues Uebel schon
Dem sichern Hause zubereitet war.
Der Ruf des Krieges ist zu euch gekommen,
Der, um den Raub der schönsten Frau zu rächen,
Die ganze Macht der Fürsten Griechenlands 415
Um Trojens Mauern lagerte. Ob sie
Die Stadt gewonnen, ihrer Rache Ziel
Erreicht, vernahm ich nicht. Mein Vater führte

Der Griechen Heer. In Aulis harrten sie
Auf günst'gen Wind vergebens; denn Diana, 420
Erzürnt auf ihren großen Führer, hielt
Die Eilenden zurück und forderte
Durch Kalchas' Mund des Königs ält'ste Tochter.
Sie lockten mit der Mutter mich in's Lager,
Sie rissen mich vor den Altar und weihten 425
Der Göttin dieses Haupt. — Sie war versöhnt;
Sie wollte nicht mein Blut, und hüllte rettend
In eine Wolke mich; in diesem Tempel
Erkannt' ich mich zuerst vom Tode wieder.
Ich bin es selbst, bin Iphigenie, 430
Des Atreus Enkel, Agamemnon's Tochter,
Der Göttin Eigenthum, die mit dir spricht.

Thoas.

Mehr Vorzug und Vertrauen geb' ich nicht
Der Königstochter, als der Unbekannten.
Ich wiederhole meinen ersten Antrag: 435
Komm', folge mir und theile, was ich habe!

Iphigenie.

Wie darf ich solchen Schritt, o König, wagen?
Hat nicht die Göttin, die mich rettete,
Allein das Recht auf mein geweihtes Leben?
Sie hat für mich den Schutzort ausgesucht, 440
Und sie bewahrt mich einem Vater, den
Sie durch den Schein genug gestraft, vielleicht
Zur schönsten Freude seines Alters, hier.
Vielleicht ist mir die frohe Rückkehr nah,
Und ich, auf ihren Weg nicht achtend, hätte 445

Mich wider ihren Willen hier gefesselt?
Ein Zeichen bat ich, wenn ich bleiben sollte.

Thoas.

Das Zeichen ist, daß du noch hier verweilst.
Such' Ausflucht solcher Art nicht ängstlich auf!
Man spricht vergebens viel, um zu versagen; 450
Der Andre hört von Allem nur das Nein.

Iphigenie.

Nicht Worte sind es, die nur blenden sollen;
Ich habe dir mein tiefstes Herz entdeckt.
Und sagst du dir nicht selbst, wie ich dem Vater,
Der Mutter, den Geschwistern mich entgegen 455
Mit ängstlichen Gefühlen sehnen muß,
Daß in den alten Hallen, wo die Trauer
Noch manchmal stille meinen Namen lispelt,
Die Freude, wie um eine Neugeborne,
Den schönsten Kranz von Säul' an Säulen schlinge! 460
O sendetest du mich auf Schiffen hin!
Du gäbest mir und Allen neues Leben.

Thoas.

So kehr' zurück! Thu', was dein Herz dich heißt,
Und höre nicht die Stimme gutes Raths
Und der Vernunft! Sei ganz ein Weib und gieb 465
Dich hin dem Triebe, der dich zügellos
Ergreift und dahin oder dorthin reißt!
Wenn ihnen eine Lust im Busen brennt,
Hält vom Verräther sie kein heilig Band,
Der sie dem Vater oder dem Gemahl 470
Aus langbewährten, treuen Armen lockt;

Und schweigt in ihrer Brust die rasche Gluth,
So dringt auf sie vergebens treu und mächtig
Der Ueberredung goldne Zunge los.

Iphigenie.

Gedenk', o König, deines edeln Wortes! 475
Willst du mein Zutraun so erwidern? Du
Schienst vorbereitet, Alles zu vernehmen.

Thoas.

Aufs Ungehoffte war ich nicht bereitet;
Doch sollt' ich's auch erwarten; wußt' ich nicht,
Daß ich mit einem Weibe handeln ging? 480

Iphigenie.

Schilt nicht, o König, unser arm Geschlecht!
Nicht herrlich wie die euern, aber nicht
Unedel sind die Waffen eines Weibes.
Glaub' es, darin bin ich dir vorzuziehn,
Daß ich dein Glück mehr als du selber kenne. 485
Du wähnest, unbekannt mit dir und mir,
Ein näher Band werd' uns zum Glück vereinen.
Voll gutes Muthes, wie voll gutes Willens,
Dringst du in mich, daß ich mich fügen soll;
Und hier dank' ich den Göttern, daß sie mir 490
Die Festigkeit gegeben, dieses Bündniß
Nicht einzugehen, das sie nicht gebilligt.

Thoas.

Es spricht kein Gott, es spricht dein eignes Herz.

Iphigenie.

Sie reden nur durch unser Herz zu uns.

Thoas.

Und hab' ich sie zu hören nicht das Recht? 495

Iphigenie.

Es überbraust der Sturm die zarte Stimme.

Thoas.

Die Priesterin vernimmt sie wohl allein?

Iphigenie.

Vor allen Andern merke sie der Fürst!

Thoas.

Dein heilig Amt und dein geerbtes Recht
An Jovis Tisch bringt dich den Göttern näher 500
Als einen erdgebornen Wilden.

Iphigenie.

So
Büß' ich nun das Vertraun, das du erzwangst.

Thoas.

Ich bin ein Mensch; und besser ist's, wir enden.
So bleibe denn mein Wort: Sei Priesterin
Der Göttin, wie sie dich erkoren hat; 505
Doch mir verzeih' Diana, daß ich ihr
Bisher, mit Unrecht und mit innerm Vorwurf,
Die alten Opfer vorenthalten habe!
Kein Fremder nahet glücklich unserm Ufer;
Von Alters her ist ihm der Tod gewiß. 510
Nur du hast mich mit einer Freundlichkeit,
In der ich bald der zarten Tochter Liebe,
Bald stille Neigung einer Braut zu sehn

Mich tief erfreute, wie mit Zauberbanden
Gefesselt, daß ich meiner Pflicht vergaß. 515
Du hattest mir die Sinnen eingewiegt,
Das Murren meines Volks vernahm ich nicht;
Nun rufen sie die Schuld von meines Sohnes
Frühzeit'gem Tode lauter über mich.
Um deinetwillen halt' ich länger nicht 520
Die Menge, die das Opfer dringend fordert.

Iphigenie.

Um meinetwillen hab' ich's nie begehrt.
Der mißversteht die Himmlischen, der sie
Blutgierig wähnt; er dichtet ihnen nur
Die eignen grausamen Begierden an. 525
Entzog die Göttin mich nicht selbst dem Priester?
Ihr war mein Dienst willkommner, als mein Tod.

Thoas.

Es ziemt sich nicht für uns, den heiligen
Gebrauch mit leicht beweglicher Vernunft
Nach unserm Sinn zu deuten und zu lenken. 530
Thu' deine Pflicht, ich werde meine thun.
Zwei Fremde, die wir in des Ufers Höhlen
Versteckt gefunden, und die meinem Lande
Nichts Gutes bringen, sind in meiner Hand.
Mit diesen nehme deine Göttin wieder 535
Ihr erstes, rechtes, lang' entbehrtes Opfer!
Ich sende sie hierher; du weißt den Dienst.

Vierter Auftritt.

Iphigenie (allein).

Du hast Wolken, gnädige Retterin,
Einzuhüllen unschuldig Verfolgte,
Und auf Winden dem eh'rnen Geschick sie 540
Aus den Armen, über das Meer,
Ueber der Erde weiteste Strecken,
Und wohin es dir gut dünkt, zu tragen.
Weise bist du und siehest das Künftige;
Nicht vorüber ist dir das Vergangne, 545
Und dein Blick ruht über den Deinen,
Wie dein Licht, das Leben der Nächte,
Ueber der Erde ruhet und waltet.
O, enthalte vom Blut meine Hände!
Nimmer bringt es Segen und Ruhe; 550
Und die Gestalt des zufällig Ermordeten
Wird auf des traurig unwilligen Mörders
Böse Stunden lauern und schrecken.
Denn die Unsterblichen lieben der Menschen
Weitverbreitete gute Geschlechter, 555
Und sie fristen das flüchtige Leben
Gerne dem Sterblichen, wollen ihm gerne
Ihres eigenen, ewigen Himmels
Mitgenießendes, fröhliches Anschaun
Eine Weile gönnen und lassen. 560

ARGUMENT.

ACT II.

ORESTES looks forward with calm resignation to his approaching death on the altar of Diana, and he only bewails the fate of Pylades. The latter, however, does not give up all hopes of rescue for both of them, and he encourages his friend to look forward to a new heroic career. Orestes calls up to memory the days gone by, when he had hoped to accomplish great and noble deeds together with Pylades; but as the gods seem to have decreed the ruin of the race of Tantalus, he is doomed to die an inglorious death. Pylades still endeavours to inspire his desponding friend with hope, for when he brings, according to the command of the gods, the image of Diana to Apollo at Delphi, the united noble pair will rescue him from the grasp of the furies. Pylades also considers it as a favourable omen, that there was a priestess in the temple of Diana, who restrains the cruel rite of human sacrifices by her gentle influence. He founds his hopes on her nobleness of mind, and, on seeing her approaching, he bids Orestes retire, as he wishes first to speak with her alone. (Sc. I.)

Iphigenia appears, and after unbinding the chains of Pylades asks him from what race he sprang, and what fate had brought him hither with his companion. Pylades tells her that they were the sons of Adrastus of Crete, and that his brother, having committed fratricide, was now pursued by the furies. Rescue was, however, promised to him in the temple of Diana. Being asked about the fate of Troy, Pylades informs Iphigenia of the fall of the town, and whilst

bewailing the death of many Greek heroes, he deplores the sad fate of Agamemnon, who had been killed by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Iphigenia, unable to listen any longer to the recital of the horrors which had occurred in her family, retires (Sc. 2), and Pylades, surmising that the priestess must have known king Agamemnon, and that she must herself be descended from a noble race, is still more strengthened in his hopes of safety.

Zweiter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Orest. Pylades.

Orest.

Es ist der Weg des Todes, den wir treten:
Mit jedem Schritt wird meine Seele stiller.
Als ich Apollen bat, das gräßliche
Geleit der Rachegeister von der Seite
Mir abzunehmen, schien er Hülf' und Rettung 565
Im Tempel seiner vielgeliebten Schwester,
Die über Tauris herrscht, mit hoffnungsreichen,
Gewissen Götterworten zu versprechen;
Und nun erfüllet sich's, daß alle Noth
Mit meinem Leben völlig enden soll. 570
Wie leicht wird's mir, dem eine Götterhand
Das Herz zusammendrückt, den Sinn betäubt,
Dem schönen Licht der Sonne zu entsagen!
Und sollen Atreus' Enkel in der Schlacht
Ein siegbekröntes Ende nicht gewinnen, 575
Soll ich wie meine Ahnen, wie mein Vater
Als Opferthier im Jammertode bluten,
So sei es! Besser hier vor dem Altar,
Als im verworfnen Winkel, wo die Netze

Der nahverwandte Meuchelmörder stellt. 580
Laßt mir so lange Ruh, ihr Unterird'schen,
Die nach dem Blut ihr, das, von meinen Tritten
Hernieder träufelnd, meinen Pfad bezeichnet,
Wie losgelaßne Hunde spürend hetzt!
Laßt mich, ich komme bald zu euch hinab. 585
Das Licht des Tags soll euch nicht sehn, noch mich.
Der Erde schöner, grüner Teppich soll
Kein Tummelplatz für Larven sein. Dort unten
Such' ich euch auf; dort bindet Alle dann
Ein gleich Geschick in ew'ge matte Nacht. 590
Nur dich, mein Pylades, dich, meiner Schuld
Und meines Banns unschuldigen Genossen,
Wie ungern nehm' ich dich in jenes Trauerland
Frühzeitig mit! Dein Leben oder Tod
Giebt mir allein noch Hoffnung oder Furcht. 595

Pylades.

Ich bin noch nicht, Orest, wie du bereit,
In jenes Schattenreich hinabzugehn.
Ich sinne noch, durch die verworrnen Pfade,
Die nach der schwarzen Nacht zu führen scheinen,
Uns zu dem Leben wieder aufzuwinden. 600
Ich denke nicht den Tod; ich sinn' und horche,
Ob nicht zu irgend einer frohen Flucht
Die Götter Rath und Wege zubereiten.
Der Tod, gefürchtet oder ungefürchtet,
Kommt unaufhaltsam. Wenn die Priesterin 605
Schon, unsere Locken weihend abzuschneiden,
Die Hand erhebt, soll dein' und meine Rettung
Mein einziger Gedanke sein. Erhebe
Von diesem Unmuth deine Seele! Zweifelnd,

Beschlennigest du die Gefahr. Apoll 610
Gab uns das Wort, im Heiligthum der Schwester
Sei Trost und Hülf' und Rückkehr dir bereitet.
Der Götter Worte sind nicht doppelsinnig,
Wie der Gedrückte sie im Unmuth wähnt.

Orest.

Des Lebens dunkle Decke breitete 615
Die Mutter schon mir um das zarte Haupt,
Und so wuchs ich herauf, ein Ebenbild
Des Vaters, und es war mein stummer Blick
Ein bittrer Vorwurf ihr und ihrem Buhlen.
Wie oft, wenn still Elektra, meine Schwester, 620
Am Feuer in der tiefen Halle saß,
Drängt' ich beklommen mich an ihren Schooß
Und starrte, wie sie bitter weinte, sie
Mit großen Augen an! Dann sagte sie
Von unserm hohen Vater viel. Wie sehr 625
Verlangt' ich ihn zu sehn, bei ihm zu sein!
Mich wünscht' ich bald nach Troja, ihn bald her.
Es kam der Tag —

Pylades.

O laß von jener Stunde
Sich Höllengeister nächtlich unterhalten!
Uns gebe die Erinnrung schöner Zeit 630
Zu frischem Heldenlaufe neue Kraft!
Die Götter brauchen manchen guten Mann
Zu ihrem Dienst auf dieser weiten Erde.
Sie haben noch auf dich gezählt; sie gaben
Dich nicht dem Vater zum Geleite mit, 635
Da er unwillig nach dem Orkus ging.

Orest.

O, wär' ich, seinen Saum ergreifend, ihm
Gefolgt!

Pylades.

So haben die, die dich erhielten,
Für mich gesorgt; denn was ich worden wäre,
Wenn du nicht lebtest, kann ich mir nicht denken, 640
Da ich mit dir und deinetwillen nur
Seit meiner Kindheit leb' und leben mag.

Orest.

Erinnre mich nicht jener schönen Tage,
Da mir dein Haus die freie Stätte gab,
Dein edler Vater klug und liebevoll 645
Die halberstarrte junge Blüthe pflegte;
Da du, ein immer munterer Geselle,
Gleich einem leichten, bunten Schmetterling
Um eine dunkle Blume, jeden Tag
Um mich mit neuem Leben gaukeltest, 650
Mir deine Lust in meine Seele spieltest,
Daß ich, vergessend meiner Noth, mit dir
In rascher Jugend hingerissen schwärmte.

Pylades.

Da fing mein Leben an, als ich dich liebte.

Orest.

Sag': meine Noth begann, und du sprichst wahr. 655
Das ist das Aengstliche von meinem Schicksal,
Daß ich, wie ein verpesteter Vertriebner,
Geheimen Schmerz und Tod im Busen trage;
Daß, wo ich den gesundsten Ort betrete,

Gar bald um mich die blühenden Gesichter 660
Den Schmerzenszug langsamen Tods verrathen.

Pylades.

Der Nächste wär' ich, diesen Tod zu sterben,
Wenn je dein Hauch, Orest, vergiftete.
Bin ich nicht immer noch voll Muth und Lust?
Und Lust und Liebe sind die Fittige 665
Zu großen Thaten.

Orest.

Große Thaten? Ja,
Ich weiß die Zeit, da wir sie vor uns sahn!
Wenn wir zusammen oft dem Wilde nach
Durch Berg' und Thäler rannten und dereinst,
An Brust und Faust dem hohen Ahnherrn gleich, 670
Mit Keul und Schwert dem Ungeheuer so,
Dem Räuber auf der Spur, zu jagen hofften;
Und dann wir Abends an der weiten See
Uns an einander lehnend ruhig saßen,
Die Wellen bis zu unsern Füßen spielten, 675
Die Welt so weit, so offen vor uns lag,
Da fuhr wohl Einer manchmal nach dem Schwert,
Und künft'ge Thaten drangen wie die Sterne
Rings um uns her unzählig aus der Nacht.

Pylades.

Unendlich ist das Werk, das zu vollführen 680
Die Seele dringt. Wir möchten jede That
So groß gleich thun, als wie sie wächst und wird,
Wenn Jahre lang durch Länder und Geschlechter
Der Mund der Dichter sie vermehrend wälzt.

Es klingt so schön, was unsre Väter thaten, 685
Wenn es, in stillen Abendschatten ruhend,
Der Jüngling mit dem Ton der Harfe schlürft;
Und was wir thun, ist, wie es ihnen war,
Voll Müh' und eitel Stückwerk!
So laufen wir nach dem, was vor uns flieht, 690
Und achten nicht des Weges, den wir treten,
Und sehen neben uns der Ahnherrn Tritte
Und ihres Erdelebens Spuren kaum.
Wir eilen immer ihrem Schatten nach,
Der göttergleich in einer weiten Ferne 695
Der Berge Haupt auf goldnen Wolken krönt.
Ich halte nichts von dem, der von sich denkt,
Wie ihn das Volk vielleicht erheben möchte;
Allein, o Jüngling, danke du den Göttern,
Daß sie so früh durch dich so viel gethan! 700

Orest.

Wenn sie den Menschen frohe That bescheren,
Daß er ein Unheil von den Seinen wendet,
Daß er sein Reich vermehrt, die Grenzen sichert,
Und alte Feinde fallen oder fliehn,
Dann mag er danken! Denn ihm hat ein Gott 705
Des Lebens erste, letzte Lust gegönnt.
Mich haben sie zum Schlächter auserkoren,
Zum Mörder meiner doch verehrten Mutter,
Und, eine Schandthat schändlich rächend, mich
Durch ihren Wink zu Grund gerichtet. Glaube, 710
Sie haben es auf Tantal's Haus gerichtet,
Und ich, der Letzte, soll nicht schuldlos, soll
Nicht ehrenvoll vergehn.

Pylades.

Die Götter rächen
Der Väter Missethat nicht an dem Sohn;
Ein Jeglicher, gut oder böse, nimmt 715
Sich seinen Lohn mit seiner That hinweg.
Es erbt der Eltern Segen, nicht ihr Fluch.

Orest.

Uns führt ihr Segen, dünkt mich, nicht hierher.

Pylades.

Doch wenigstens der hohen Götter Wille.

Orest.

So ist's ihr Wille denn, der uns verderbt. 720

Pylades.

Thu', was sie dir gebieten, und erwarte!
Bringst du die Schwester zu Apollen hin,
Und wohnen Beide dann vereint zu Delphi,
Verehrt von einem Volk, das edel denkt,
So wird für diese That das hohe Paar 725
Dir gnädig sein, sie werden aus der Hand
Der Unterird'schen dich erretten. Schon
In diesen heil'gen Hain wagt keine sich.

Orest.

So hab' ich wenigstens geruh'gen Tod.

Pylades.

Ganz anders denk' ich, und nicht ungeschickt 730
Hab' ich das schon Geschehne mit dem Künft'gen
Verbunden und im Stillen ausgelegt.
Vielleicht reift in der Götter Rath schon lange

Das große Werk. Diana sehnet sich
Von diesem rauhen Ufer der Barbaren 735
Und ihren blut'gen Menschenopfern weg.
Wir waren zu der schönen That bestimmt,
Uns wird sie auferlegt, und seltsam sind
Wir an der Pforte schon gezwungen hier.

Orest.

Mit seltner Kunst flichst du der Götter Rath 740
Und deine Wünsche klug in Eins zusammen.

Pylades.

Was ist des Menschen Klugheit, wenn sie nicht
Auf Jener Willen droben achtend lauscht?
Zu einer schweren That beruft ein Gott
Den edlen Mann, der viel verbrach, und legt 745
Ihm auf, was uns unmöglich scheint zu enden.
Es siegt der Held, und büßend dienet er
Den Göttern und der Welt, die ihn verehrt.

Orest.

Bin ich bestimmt, zu leben und zu handeln,
So nehm' ein Gott von meiner schweren Stirn 750
Den Schwindel weg, der auf dem schlüpfrigen,
Mit Mutterblut besprengten Pfade fort
Mich zu den Todten reißt! Er trockne gnädig
Die Quelle, die, mir aus der Mutter Wunden
Entgegen sprudelnd, ewig mich befleckt! 755

Pylades.

Erwart' es ruhiger! Du mehrst das Uebel
Und nimmst das Amt der Furien auf dich.
Laß mich nur sinnen, bleibe still! Zuletzt,

Bedarf's zur That vereinter Kräfte, dann
Ruf' ich dich auf, und Beide schreiten wir 760
Mit überlegter Kühnheit zur Vollendung.

Orest.

Ich hör' Ulyssen reden.

Pylades.

Spotte nicht!
Ein Jeglicher muß seinen Helden wählen,
Dem er die Wege zum Olymp hinauf
Sich nacharbeitet. Laß es mich gestehn: 765
Mir scheinen List und Klugheit nicht den Mann
Zu schänden, der sich kühnen Thaten weiht.

Orest.

Ich schätze den, der tapfer ist und grad.

Pylades.

Drum hab' ich keinen Rath von dir verlangt.
Schon ist ein Schritt gethan. Von unsern Wächtern 770
Hab' ich bisher gar Vieles ausgelockt.
Ich weiß, ein fremdes, göttergleiches Weib
Hält jenes blutige Gesetz gefesselt;
Ein reines Herz und Weihrauch und Gebet
Bringt sie den Göttern dar. Man rühmet hoch 775
Die Gütige; man glaubet, sie entspringe
Vom Stamm der Amazonen, sei geflohn,
Um einem großen Unheil zu entgehn.

Orest.

Es scheint, ihr lichtes Reich verlor die Kraft
Durch des Verbrechers Nähe, den der Fluch 780
Wie eine breite Nacht verfolgt und deckt.

Die fromme Blutgier löst den alten Brauch
Von seinen Fesseln los, uns zu verderben.
Der wilde Sinn des Königs tödtet uns;
Ein Weib wird uns nicht retten, wenn er zürnt. 785

Pylades.

Wohl uns, daß es ein Weib ist! Denn ein Mann,
Der beste selbst, gewöhnet seinen Geist
An Grausamkeit und macht sich auch zuletzt
Aus dem, was er verabscheut, ein Gesetz,
Wird aus Gewohnheit hart und fast unkenntlich. 790
Allein ein Weib bleibt stet auf Einem Sinn,
Den sie gefaßt. Du rechnest sicherer
Auf sie im Guten wie im Bösen. — Still!
Sie kommt; laß uns allein! Ich darf nicht gleich
Ihr unsre Namen nennen, unser Schicksal 795
Nicht ohne Rückhalt ihr vertraun. Du gehst,
Und eh' sie mit dir spricht, treff' ich dich noch.

Zweiter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Pylades.

Iphigenie.

Woher du seist und kommst, o Fremdling, sprich!
Mir scheint es, daß ich eher einem Griechen
Als einem Scythen dich vergleichen soll. 800
(Sie nimmt ihm die Ketten ab.)
Gefährlich ist die Freiheit, die ich gebe;
Die Götter wenden ab, was euch bedroht!

Pylades.

O süße Stimme! Vielwillkommner Ton
Der Muttersprach' in einem fremden Lande!
Des väterlichen Hafens blaue Berge 805
Seh' ich Gefangner neu willkommen wieder
Vor meinen Augen. Laß dir diese Freude
Versichern, daß auch ich ein Grieche bin!
Vergessen hab' ich einen Augenblick,
Wie sehr ich dein bedarf, und meinen Geist 810
Der herrlichen Erscheinung zugewendet.
O sage, wenn dir ein Verhängniß nicht
Die Lippe schließt, aus welchem unsrer Stämme
Du deine göttergleiche Herkunft zählst!

Iphigenie.

Die Priesterin, von ihrer Göttin selbst 815
Gewählet und geheiligt, spricht mit dir.
Das laß dir gnügen! Sage, wer du seist
Und welch unselig waltendes Geschick
Mit dem Gefährten dich hierher gebracht.

Pylades.

Leicht kann ich dir erzählen, welch ein Uebel 820
Mit lastender Gesellschaft uns verfolgt.
O, könntest du der Hoffnung frohen Blick
Uns auch so leicht, du Göttliche, gewähren!
Aus Kreta sind wir, Söhne des Adrast's;
Ich bin der jüngste, Kephalus genannt, 825
Und er Laodamas, der älteste
Des Hauses. Zwischen uns stand rauh und wild
Ein mittlerer, und trennte schon im Spiel
Der ersten Jugend Einigkeit und Lust.

Gelassen folgten wir der Mutter Worten, 830
So lang des Vaters Kraft vor Troja stritt;
Doch als er beutereich zurücke kam
Und kurz darauf verschied, da trennte bald
Der Streit um Reich und Erbe die Geschwister.
Ich neigte mich zum ältsten. Er erschlug 835
Den Bruder. Um der Blutschuld willen treibt
Die Furie gewaltig ihn umher.
Doch diesem wilden Ufer sendet uns
Apoll, der Delphische, mit Hoffnung zu.
Im Tempel seiner Schwester hieß er uns 840
Der Hülfe segensvolle Hand erwarten.
Gefangen sind wir und hierher gebracht,
Und dir als Opfer dargestellt. Du weißt's.

Iphigenie.

Fiel Troja? Theurer Mann, versichr' es mir!

Pylades.

Es liegt. O sichre du uns Rettung zu! 845
Beschleunige die Hülfe, die ein Gott
Versprach! Erbarme meines Bruders dich!
O, sag' ihm bald ein gutes, holdes Wort!
Doch schone seiner, wenn du mit ihm sprichst!
Das bitt' ich eifrig; denn es wird gar leicht 850
Durch Freud' und Schmerz und durch Erinnerung
Sein Innerstes ergriffen und zerrüttet.
Ein fieberhafter Wahnsinn fällt ihn an,
Und seine schöne, freie Seele wird
Den Furien zum Raube hingegeben. 855

Iphigenie.

So groß dein Unglück ist, beschwör' ich dich,
Vergiß es, bis du mir genug gethan!

Pylades.

Die hohe Stadt, die zehen lange Jahre
Dem ganzen Heer der Griechen widerstand,
Liegt nun im Schutte, steigt nicht wieder auf. 860
Doch manche Gräber unsrer Besten heißen
Uns an das Ufer der Barbaren denken.
Achill liegt dort mit seinem schönen Freunde.

Iphigenie.

So seid ihr Götterbilder auch zu Staub!

Pylades.

Auch Palamedes, Ajax Telamon's, 865
Sie sah'n des Vaterlandes Tag nicht wieder.

Iphigenie (für sich).

Er schweigt von meinem Vater, nennt ihn nicht
Mit den Erschlagnen. Ja! Er lebt mir noch!
Ich werd' ihn sehn! O hoffe, liebes Herz!

Pylades.

Doch selig sind die Tausende, die starben 870
Den bittersüßen Tod von Feindeshand!
Denn wüste Schrecken und ein traurig Ende
Hat den Rückkehrenden statt des Triumphs
Ein feindlich aufgebrachter Gott bereitet.
Kommt denn der Menschen Stimme nicht zu euch? 875
So weit sie reicht, trägt sie den Ruf umher
Von unerhörten Thaten, die geschahn.
So ist der Jammer, der Mycenens Hallen
Mit immer wiederholten Seufzern füllt,
Dir ein Geheimniß? — Klytämnestra hat 880
Mit Hülf' Aegisthens den Gemahl berückt,

Am Tage seiner Rückkehr ihn ermordet! —
Ja, du verehrest dieses Königshaus!
Ich seh' es, deine Brust bekämpft vergebens
Das unerwartet ungeheure Wort. 885
Bist du die Tochter eines Freundes? Bist
Du nachbarlich in dieser Stadt geboren?
Verbirg es nicht und rechne mir's nicht zu,
Daß ich der Erste diese Gräuel melde!

Iphigenie.

Sag' an, wie ward die schwere That vollbracht? 890

Pylades.

Am Tage seiner Ankunft, da der König,
Vom Bad erquickt und ruhig, sein Gewand
Aus der Gemahlin Hand verlangend, stieg,
Warf die Verderbliche ein faltenreich
Und künstlich sich verwirrendes Gewebe 895
Ihm auf die Schultern, um das edle Haupt;
Und da er wie von einem Netze sich
Vergebens zu entwickeln strebte, schlug
Aegisth ihn, der Verräther, und verhüllt
Ging zu den Todten dieser große Fürst. 900

Iphigenie.

Und welchen Lohn erhielt der Mitverschworne?

Pylades.

Ein Reich und Bette, das er schon besaß.

Iphigenie.

So trieb zur Schandthat eine böse Lust?

Pylades.

Und einer alten Rache tief Gefühl.

Iphigenie.

Und wie beleidigte der König sie? 905

Pylades.

Mit schwerer That, die, wenn Entschuldigung
Des Mordes wäre, sie entschuldigte.
Nach Aulis lockt' er sie und brachte dort,
Als eine Gottheit sich der Griechen Fahrt
Mit ungestümen Winden widersetzte, 910
Die ält'ste Tochter, Iphigenien,
Vor den Altar Dianens, und sie fiel
Ein blutig Opfer für der Griechen Heil.
Dies, sagt man, hat ihr einen Widerwillen
So tief in's Herz geprägt, daß sie dem Werben 915
Aegisthens sich ergab und den Gemahl
Mit Netzen des Verderbens selbst umschlang.

Iphigenie (sich verhüllend).

Es ist genug! Du wirst mich wiedersehn.

Pylades (allein).

Von dem Geschick des Königshauses scheint
Sie tief gerührt. Wer sie auch immer sei, 920
So hat sie selbst den König wohl gekannt,
Und ist, zu unserm Glück, aus hohem Hause
Hierher verkauft. Nur stille, liebes Herz,
Und laß dem Stern der Hoffnung, der uns blinkt,
Mit frohem Muth uns klug entgegensteuern! 925

ARGUMENT.

ACT III.

In loosening the bonds of Orestes, Iphigenia bewails the hopeless doom of the strangers, whose aspect recalls to her mind the image of Greek heroes. Being asked to conclude his brother's tale, he tells her that both Orestes and Electra survive; but the former, having slain his mother Clytemnestra, in order to avenge his father's death, was now pursued by the furies. He then reveals to Iphigenia that he himself is Orestes, and after imploring her to save his friend and to return with the latter to Greece, he withdraws. Iphigenia fervently expresses her thanks to the gods for having granted to her the fulfilment of her ardent desire to behold her brother, and when Orestes again approaches her, she reveals to him that she is his sister Iphigenia, and endeavours to inspire him with hope. Orestes is first unwilling to believe her, but when he is convinced that she is Iphigenia, he only sees despondingly a decree of relentless fate in the circumstance, that his own sister was destined to slay him on the altar of Diana. He sinks down exhausted, and Iphigenia retires to seek the aid of Pylades (Scene 1).

When Orestes recovers from his swoon he believes to be in the realm of the dead, and in his vision he beholds the spirits of his ancestors and his reconciled parents (Scene 2), and when Pylades and Iphigenia appear he greets them as shades, who have descended, like himself, to the realm of Pluto. Iphigenia addresses a prayer to Apollo and Diana to free her brother from delusion, and Pylades admonishes

him to collect himself and to recognise them as living beings, so that their safe return might not be endangered. The veil of delusion seems now to vanish from the eyes of Orestes, and he feels that the dread Eumenides have left him. He is now restored to new life, and Pylades urges him and Iphigenia to quick counsel and resolve. (Scene 3).

Dritter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Orest.

Iphigenie.

Unglücklicher, ich löse deine Bande
Zum Zeichen eines schmerzlichern Geschicks.
Die Freiheit, die das Heiligthum gewährt,
Ist, wie der letzte lichte Lebensblick
Des schwer Erkrankten, Todesbote. Noch 930
Kann ich es mir und darf es mir nicht sagen,
Daß ihr verloren seid! Wie könnt' ich euch
Mit mörderischer Hand dem Tode weihen?
Und Niemand, wer es sei, darf euer Haupt,
So lang' ich Priesterin Dianens bin, 935
Berühren. Doch verweigr' ich jene Pflicht,
Wie sie der aufgebrachte König fordert,
So wählt er eine meiner Jungfraun mir
Zur Folgerin, und ich vermag alsdann
Mit heißem Wunsch allein euch beizustehn. 940
O werther Landsmann! Selbst der letzte Knecht,
Der an den Herd der Vatergötter streifte,
Ist uns in fremdem Lande hochwillkommen:
Wie soll ich euch genug mit Freud' und Segen
Empfangen, die ihr mir das Bild der Helden, 945

Die ich von Eltern her verehren lernte,
Entgegenbringet und das innre Herz
Mit neuer, schöner Hoffnung schmeichelnd labet!

Orest.

Verbirgst du deinen Namen, deine Herkunft
Mit klugem Vorsatz? Oder darf ich wissen, 950
Wer mir, gleich einer Himmlischen, begegnet?

Iphigenie.

Du sollst mich kennen. Jetzo sag' mir an,
Was ich nur halb von deinem Bruder hörte,
Das Ende derer, die, von Troja kehrend,
Ein hartes, unerwartetes Geschick 955
Auf ihrer Wohnung Schwelle stumm empfing.
Zwar ward ich jung an diesen Strand geführt;
Doch wohl erinnr' ich mich des scheuen Blicks,
Den ich mit Staunen und mit Bangigkeit
Auf jene Helden warf. Sie zogen aus, 960
Als hätte der Olymp sich aufgethan
Und die Gestalten der erlauchten Vorwelt
Zum Schrecken Ilion's herabgesendet,
Und Agamemnon war vor Allen herrlich.
O sage mir!—Er fiel, sein Haus betretend, 965
Durch seiner Frauen und Aegisthens Tücke?

Orest.

Du sagst's!

Iphigenie.

Weh dir, unseliges Mycen!
So haben Tantal's Enkel Fluch auf Fluch
Mit vollen wilden Händen ausgesät
Und, gleich dem Unkraut, wüste Häupter schüttelnd 970

Und tausendfält'gen Samen um sich streuend,
Den Kindeskindern nahverwandte Mörder
Zur ew'gen Wechselwuth erzeugt! — Enthülle,
Was von der Rede deines Bruders schnell
Die Finsterniß des Schreckens mir verdeckte! 975
Wie ist des großen Stammes letzter Sohn,
Das holde Kind, bestimmt des Vaters Rächer
Dereinst zu sein, wie ist Orest dem Tage
Des Bluts entgangen? Hat ein gleich Geschick
Mit des Avernus Netzen ihn umschlungen? 980
Ist er gerettet? Lebt er? Lebt Elektra?

Orest.

Sie leben.

Iphigenie.

Goldne Sonne, leihe mir
Die schönsten Strahlen, lege sie zum Dank
Vor Jovis Thron! Denn ich bin arm und stumm.

Orest.

Bist du gastfreundlich diesem Königshause, 985
Bist du mit nähern Banden ihm verbunden,
Wie deine schöne Freude mir verräth,
So bändige dein Herz und halt' es fest!
Denn unerträglich muß dem Fröhlichen
Ein jäher Rückfall in die Schmerzen sein. 990
Du weißt nur, merk' ich, Agamemnon's Tod.

Iphigenie.

Hab' ich an dieser Nachricht nicht genug?

Orest.

Du hast des Gräuels Hälfte nur erfahren.

Iphigenie.

Was fürcht' ich noch? Orest, Elektra leben.

Orest.

Und fürchtest du für Klytämnestren nichts? 995

Iphigenie.

Sie rettet weder Hoffnung, weder Furcht.

Orest.

Auch schied sie aus dem Land der Hoffnung ab.

Iphigenie.

Vergoß sie reuig wüthend selbst ihr Blut?

Orest.

Nein, doch ihr eigen Blut gab ihr den Tod.

Iphigenie.

Sprich deutlicher, daß ich nicht länger sinne! 1000
Die Ungewißheit schlägt mir tausendfältig
Die dunkeln Schwingen um das bange Haupt.

Orest.

So haben mich die Götter ausersehn
Zum Boten einer That, die ich so gern
Ins klanglos-dumpfe Höllenreich der Nacht 1005
Verbergen möchte? Wider meinen Willen
Zwingt mich dein holder Mund; allein er darf
Auch etwas Schmerzlichs fordern und erhält's.
Am Tage, da der Vater fiel, verbarg
Elektra rettend ihren Bruder; Strophius, 1010
Des Vaters Schwäher, nahm ihn willig auf,
Erzog ihn neben seinem eignen Sohne,

Der, Pylades genannt, die schönsten Bande
Der Freundschaft um den Angekommnen knüpfte.
Und wie sie wuchsen, wuchs in ihrer Seele 1015
Die brennende Begier, des Königs Tod
Zu rächen. Unversehen, fremd gekleidet,
Erreichen sie Mycen, als brächten sie
Die Trauernachricht von Orestens Tode
Mit seiner Asche. Wohl empfänget sie 1020
Die Königin; sie treten in das Haus.
Elektren giebt Orest sich zu erkennen;
Sie bläst der Rache Feuer in ihm auf,
Das vor der Mutter heil'ger Gegenwart
In sich zurückgebrannt war. Stille führt 1025
Sie ihn zum Orte, wo sein Vater fiel,
Wo eine alte leichte Spur des frech
Vergoßnen Blutes oft gewaschnen Boden
Mit blassen, ahnungsvollen Streifen färbte.
Mit ihrer Feuerzunge schilderte 1030
Sie jeden Umstand der verruchten That,
Ihr knechtisch elend durchgebrachtes Leben,
Den Uebermuth der glücklichen Verräther,
Und die Gefahren, die nun der Geschwister
Von einer stiefgewordnen Mutter warteten.— 1035
Hier drang sie jenen alten Dolch ihm auf,
Der schon in Tantal's Hause grimmig wüthete.
Und Klytämnestra fiel durch Sohnes Hand.

Iphigenie.

Unsterbliche, die ihr den reinen Tag
Auf immer neuen Wolken selig lebet, 1040
Habt ihr nur darum mich so manches Jahr
Von Menschen abgesondert, mich so nah

Bei euch gehalten, mir die kindliche
Beschäftigung, des heil'gen Feuers Gluth
Zu nähren, aufgetragen, meine Seele 1045
Der Flamme gleich in ew'ger, frommer Klarheit
Zu euern Wohnungen hinaufgezogen,
Daß ich nur meines Hauses Gräuel später
Und tiefer fühlen sollte? — Sage mir
Vom Unglücksel'gen! Sprich mir von Orest! 1050

Orest.

O könnte man von seinem Tode sprechen!
Wie gährend stieg aus der Erschlagnen Blut
Der Mutter Geist
Und ruft der Nacht uralten Töchtern zu:
„Laß nicht den Muttermörder entfliehn! 1055
Verfolgt den Verbrecher! Euch ist er geweiht!"
Sie horchen auf, es schaut ihr hohler Blick
Mit der Begier des Adlers um sich her;
Sie rühren sich in ihren schwarzen Höhlen,
Und aus den Winkeln schleichen ihre Gefährten, 1060
Der Zweifel und die Reue, leis' herbei.
Vor ihnen steigt ein Dampf vom Acheron;
In seinen Wolkenkreisen wälzet sich
Die ewige Betrachtung des Geschehnen
Verwirrend um des Schuld'gen Haupt umher. 1065
Und sie, berechtigt zum Verderben, treten
Der gottbesä'ten Erde schönen Boden,
Von dem ein alter Fluch sie längst verbannte.
Den Flüchtigen verfolgt ihr schneller Fuß;
Sie geben nur, um neu zu schrecken, Rast. 1070

Iphigenie.

Unseliger, du bist in gleichem Fall

Und fühlst, was er, der arme Flüchtling, leidet!

Orest.

Was sagst du mir? Was wähnst du gleichen Fall?

Iphigenie.

Dich drückt ein Brudermord wie Jenen; mir
Vertraute dies dein jüngster Bruder schon. 1075

Orest.

Ich kann nicht leiden, daß du, große Seele,
Mit einem falschen Wort betrogen werdest.
Ein lügenhaft Gewebe knüpf' ein Fremder
Dem Fremden, sinnreich und der List gewohnt,
Zur Falle vor die Füße; zwischen uns 1080
Sei Wahrheit!
Ich bin Orest, und dieses schuld'ge Haupt
Senkt nach der Grube sich und sucht den Tod;
In jeglicher Gestalt sei er willkommen!
Wer du auch seist, so wünsch' ich Rettung dir 1085
Und meinem Freunde; mir wünsch' ich sie nicht.
Du scheinst hier wider Willen zu verweilen;
Erfindet Rath zur Flucht und laßt mich hier!
Es stürze mein entseelter Leib vom Fels,
Es rauche bis zum Meer hinab mein Blut, 1090
Und bringe Fluch dem Ufer der Barbaren!
Geht ihr, daheim im schönen Griechenland
Ein neues Leben freundlich anzufangen! (Er entfernt sich.)

Iphigenie.

So steigst du denn, Erfüllung, schönste Tochter
Des größten Vaters, endlich zu mir nieder! 1095
Wie ungeheuer steht dein Bild vor mir!
Kaum reicht mein Blick dir an die Hände, die,

Mit Frucht und Segenskränzen angefüllt,
Die Schätze des Olympus niederbringen.
Wie man den König an dem Uebermaß 1100
Der Gaben kennt — denn ihm muß wenig scheinen,
Was Tausenden schon Reichthum ist — so kennt
Man euch, ihr Götter, an gesparten, lang'
Und weise zubereiteten Geschenken.
Denn ihr allein wißt, was uns frommen kann, 1105
Und schaut der Zukunft ausgedehntes Reich,
Wenn jedes Abends Stern- und Nebelhülle
Die Aussicht uns verdeckt. Gelassen hört
Ihr unser Flehn, das um Beschleunigung
Euch kindisch bittet; aber eure Hand 1110
Bricht unreif nie die goldnen Himmelsfrüchte;
Und wehe dem, der, ungeduldig sie
Ertrotzend, saure Speise sich zum Tod
Genießt. O laßt das lang' erwartete,
Noch kaum gedachte Glück nicht, wie den Schatten 1115
Des abgeschiednen Freundes, eitel mir
Und dreifach schmerzlicher vorübergehn!

Orest (tritt wieder zu ihr).

Rufst du die Götter an für dich und Pylades,
So nenne meinen Namen nicht mit eurem!
Du rettest den Verbrecher nicht, zu dem 1120
Du dich gesellst, und theilest Fluch und Noth.

Iphigenie.

Mein Schicksal ist an deines festgebunden.

Orest.

Mit Nichten! Laß allein und unbegleitet

Mich zu den Todten gehn! Verhülltest du
In deinen Schleier selbst den Schuldigen, 1125
Du birgst ihn nicht vorm Blick der Immerwachen,
Und deine Gegenwart, du Himmlische,
Drängt sie nur seitwärts und verscheucht sie nicht.
Sie dürfen mit den ehrnen frechen Füßen
Des heil'gen Waldes Boden nicht betreten; 1130
Doch hör' ich aus der Ferne hier und da
Ihr gräßliches Gelächter. Wölfe harren
So um den Baum, auf den ein Reisender
Sich rettete. Da draußen ruhen sie
Gelagert; und verlass' ich diesen Hain, 1135
Dann steigen sie, die Schlangenhäupter schüttelnd,
Von allen Seiten Staub erregend, auf
Und treiben ihre Beute vor sich her.

Iphigenie.

Kannst du, Orest, ein freundlich Wort vernehmen?

Orest.

Spar' es für einen Freund der Götter auf! 1140

Iphigenie.

Sie geben dir zu neuer Hoffnung Licht.

Orest.

Durch Rauch und Qualm seh' ich den matten Schein
Des Todtenflusses mir zur Hölle leuchten.

Iphigenie.

Hast du Elektren, Eine Schwester nur?

Orest.

Die Eine kannt' ich; doch die ältste nahm 1145
Ihr gut Geschick, das uns so schrecklich schien,

Bei Zeiten aus dem Elend unsres Hauses.
O, laß dein Fragen, und geselle dich
Nicht auch zu den Erinyen! Sie blasen
Mir schadenfroh die Asche von der Seele, 1150
Und leiden nicht, daß sich die letzten Kohlen
Von unsres Hauses Schreckensbrande still
In mir verglimmen. Soll die Gluth denn ewig,
Vorsätzlich angefacht, mit Höllenschwefel
Genährt, mir auf der Seele marternd brennen? 1155

Iphigenie.

Ich bringe süßes Rauchwerk in die Flamme.
O, laß den reinen Hauch der Liebe dir
Die Gluth des Busens leise wehend kühlen!
Orest, mein Theurer, kannst du nicht vernehmen?
Hat das Geleit der Schreckensgötter so 1160
Das Blut in deinen Adern aufgetrocknet?
Schleicht, wie vom Haupt der gräßlichen Gorgone,
Versteinernd dir ein Zauber durch die Glieder?
O, wenn vergoßnen Mutterblutes Stimme
Zur Höll' hinab mit dumpfen Tönen ruft, 1165
Soll nicht der reinen Schwester Segenswort
Hülfreiche Götter vom Olympus rufen?

Orest.

Es ruft, es ruft! So willst du mein Verderben?
Verbirgt in dir sich eine Rachegöttin?
Wer bist du, deren Stimme mir entsetzlich 1170
Das Innerste in seinen Tiefen wendet?

Iphigenie.

Es zeigt sich dir im tiefsten Herzen an:

Orest, ich bin's! Sieh Iphigenien!
Ich lebe!

Orest.

Du!

Iphigenie.

Mein Bruder!

Orest.

Laß! Hinweg!
Ich rathe dir, berühre nicht die Locken! 1175
Wie von Kreusa's Brautkleid zündet sich
Ein unauslöschlich Feuer von mir fort.
Laß mich! Wie Herkules will ich Unwürd'ger
Den Tod voll Schmach, in mich verschlossen, sterben.

Iphigenie.

Du wirst nicht untergehn! O, daß ich nur 1180
Ein ruhig Wort von dir vernehmen könnte!
O löse meine Zweifel, laß des Glückes,
Des lang' erflehten, mich auch sicher werden!
Es wälzet sich ein Rad von Freud' und Schmerz
Durch meine Seele. Von dem fremden Manne 1185
Entfernet mich ein Schauer; doch es reißt
Mein Innerstes gewaltig mich zum Bruder.

Orest.

Ist hier Lyäens Tempel? Und ergreift
Unbändig-heil'ge Wuth die Priesterin?

Iphigenie.

O, höre mich! O, sieh mich an, wie mir 1190
Nach einer langen Zeit das Herz sich öffnet
Der Seligkeit, dem Liebsten, was die Welt

Noch für mich tragen kann, das Haupt zu küssen,
Mit meinen Armen, die den leeren Winden
Nur ausgebreitet waren, dich zu fassen! 1195
O, laß mich! Laß mich! Denn es quillet heller
Nicht vom Parnaß die ew'ge Quelle sprudelnd
Von Fels zu Fels ins goldne Thal hinab,
Wie Freude mir vom Herzen wallend fließt,
Und wie ein selig Meer mich rings umfängt. 1200
Orest! Orest! Mein Bruder!

Orest.

Schöne Nymphe,
Ich traue dir und deinem Schmeicheln nicht.
Diana fordert strenge Dienerinnen
Und rächet das entweihte Heiligthum.
Entferne deinen Arm von meiner Brust! 1205
Und wenn du einen Jüngling rettend lieben,
Das schöne Glück ihm zärtlich bieten willst,
So wende meinem Freunde dein Gemüth,
Dem würd'gern Manne, zu. Er irrt umher
Auf jenem Felsenpfade; such' ihn auf, 1210
Weis' ihn zurecht und schone meiner!

Iphigenie.

Fasse
Dich, Bruder, und erkenne die Gefundne!
Schilt einer Schwester reine Himmelsfreude
Nicht unbesonnene, strafbare Lust!
O nehmt den Wahn ihm von dem starren Auge, 1215
Daß uns der Augenblick der höchsten Freude
Nicht dreifach elend mache! Sie ist hier,
Die längst verlorne Schwester. Vom Altar

Riß mich die Göttin weg und rettete
Hierher mich in ihr eigen Heiligthum. 1220
Gefangen bist du, dargestellt zum Opfer,
Und findest in der Priesterin die Schwester.

Orest.

Unselige! So mag die Sonne denn
Die letzten Gräuel unsres Hauses sehn!
Ist nicht Elektra hier, damit auch sie 1225
Mit uns zu Grunde gehe, nicht ihr Leben
Zu schwererem Geschick und Leiden friste?
Gut, Priesterin! Ich folge zum Altar:
Der Brudermord ist hergebrachte Sitte
Des alten Stammes; und ich danke, Götter, 1230
Daß ihr mich ohne Kinder auszurotten
Beschlossen habt. Und laß dir rathen, habe
Die Sonne nicht zu lieb und nicht die Sterne!
Komm', folge mir in's dunkle Reich hinab!
Wie sich vom Schwefelpfuhl erzeugte Drachen, 1235
Bekämpfend die verwandte Brut, verschlingen,
Zerstört sich selbst das wüthende Geschlecht;
Komm' kinderlos und schuldlos mit hinab!
Du siehst mich mit Erbarmen an? Laß ab!
Mit solchen Blicken suchte Klytämnestra 1240
Sich einen Weg nach ihres Sohnes Herzen;
Doch sein geschwungner Arm traf ihre Brust.
Die Mutter fiel! — Tritt auf, unwill'ger Geist!
Im Kreis geschlossen tretet an, ihr Furien,
Und wohnet dem willkommnen Schauspiel bei, 1245
Dem letzten, gräßlichsten, das ihr bereitet!
Nicht Haß und Rache schärfen ihren Dolch;
Die liebevolle Schwester wird zur That

Gezwungen. Weine nicht! Du hast nicht Schuld.
Seit meinen ersten Jahren hab' ich nichts 1250
Geliebt, wie ich dich lieben könnte, Schwester.
Ja, schwinge deinen Stahl, verschone nicht,
Zerreiße diesen Busen, und eröffne
Den Strömen, die hier sieden, einen Weg!
(Er sinkt in Ermattung.)

Iphigenie.

Allein zu tragen dieses Glück und Elend 1255
Vermag ich nicht. — Wo bist du, Pylades?
Wo find' ich deine Hülfe, theurer Mann?
(Sie entfernt sich suchend.)

Zweiter Auftritt.

Orest (aus seiner Betäubung erwachend und sich aufrichtend).

Noch einen! Reiche mir aus Lethe's Fluthen
Den letzten kühlen Becher der Erquickung!
Bald ist der Krampf des Lebens aus dem Busen 1260
Hinweggespült; bald fließet still mein Geist,
Der Quelle des Vergessens hingegeben,
Zu euch, ihr Schatten, in die ew'gen Nebel.
Gefällig laßt in eurer Ruhe sich
Den umgetriebnen Sohn der Erde laben! 1265
Welch ein Gelispel hör' ich in den Zweigen,
Welch ein Geräusch aus jener Dämmrung säuseln? —
Sie kommen schon, den neuen Gast zu sehn!
Wer ist die Schaar, die herrlich mit einander
Wie ein versammelt Fürstenhaus sich freut? 1270

Sie gehen friedlich, Alt' und Junge, Männer
Mit Weibern; göttergleich und ähnlich scheinen
Die wandelnden Gestalten. Ja, sie sind's,
Die Ahnherrn meines Hauses. — Mit Thyesten
Geht Atreus in vertraulichen Gesprächen; 1275
Die Knaben schlüpfen scherzend um ihn her.
Ist keine Feindschaft hier mehr unter euch?
Verlosch die Rache wie das Licht der Sonne?
So bin auch ich willkommen, und ich darf
In euern feierlichen Zug mich mischen. 1280

Willkommen, Väter! Euch grüßt Orest,
Von eurem Stamme der letzte Mann;
Was ihr gesä't, hat er geerntet;
Mit Fluch beladen, stieg er herab.
Doch leichter trägt sich hier jede Bürde: 1285
Nehmt ihn, o nehmt ihn in euren Kreis! —
Dich, Atreus, ehr' ich, auch dich, Thyesten;
Wir sind hier Alle der Feindschaft los. —
Zeigt mir den Vater, den ich nur Einmal
Im Leben sah! — Bist du's, mein Vater? 1290
Und führst die Mutter vertraut mit dir?
Darf Klytemnästra die Hand dir reichen,
So darf Orest auch zu ihr treten
Und darf ihr sagen: Sieh deinen Sohn! —
Seht euren Sohn! Heißt ihn willkommen! 1295
Auf Erden war in unserm Hause
Der Gruß des Mordes gewisse Losung,
Und das Geschlecht des alten Tantal's
Hat seine Freuden jenseits der Nacht.
Ihr ruft Willkommen und nehmt mich auf. 1300
O führt zum Alten, zum Ahnherrn mich!

Wo ist der Alte? Daß ich ihn sehe,
Das theure Haupt, das vielverehrte,
Das mit den Göttern zu Rathe saß!
Ihr scheint zu zaudern, euch wegzuwenden? 1305
Was ist es? Leidet der Göttergleiche?
Weh mir! Es haben die Uebermächt'gen
Der Heldenbrust grausame Qualen
Mit ehrnen Ketten fest aufgeschmiedet.

Dritter Auftritt.

Orest. Iphigenie. Pylades.

Orest.

Seid ihr auch schon herabgekommen? 1310
Wohl, Schwester, dir! Noch fehlt Elektra;
Ein güt'ger Gott send' uns die Eine
Mit sanften Pfeilen auch schnell herab!
Dich, armer Freund, muß ich bedauern!
Komm' mit, komm' mit zu Pluto's Thron, 1315
Als neue Gäste den Wirth zu grüßen!

Iphigenie.

Geschwister, die ihr an dem weiten Himmel
Das schöne Licht bei Tag und Nacht herauf
Den Menschen bringet, und den Abgeschiednen
Nicht leuchten dürfet, rettet uns Geschwister! 1320
Du liebst, Diana, deinen holden Bruder
Vor Allem, was dir Erd' und Himmel bietet,
Und wendest dein jungfräulich Angesicht

Nach seinem ew'gen Lichte sehnend still.
O laß den Einz'gen, Spätgefundnen mir 1325
Nicht in der Finsterniß des Wahnsinns rasen!
Und ist dein Wille, da du hier mich bargst,
Nunmehr vollendet, willst du mir durch ihn
Und ihm durch mich die sel'ge Hülfe geben,
So lös' ihn von den Banden jenes Fluchs, 1330
Daß nicht die theure Zeit der Rettung schwinde!

Pylades.

Erkennst du uns und diesen heil'gen Hain
Und dieses Licht, das nicht den Todten leuchtet?
Fühlst du den Arm des Freundes und der Schwester,
Die dich noch fest, noch lebend halten? Faß 1335
Uns kräftig an! Wir sind nicht leere Schatten.
Merk' auf mein Wort! Vernimm es! Raffe dich
Zusammen! Jeder Augenblick ist theuer,
Und unsre Rückkehr hängt an zarten Fäden,
Die, scheint es, eine günst'ge Parze spinnt. 1340

Orest (zu Iphigenien).

Laß mich zum erstenmal mit freiem Herzen
In deinen Armen reine Freude haben!
Ihr Götter, die mit flammender Gewalt
Ihr schwere Wolken aufzuzehren wandelt,
Und gnädig-ernst den lang' erflehten Regen 1345
Mit Donnerstimmen und mit Windesbrausen
In wilden Strömen auf die Erde schüttet,
Doch bald der Menschen grausendes Erwarten
In Segen auflös't, und das bange Staunen
In Freudeblick und lauten Dank verwandelt, 1350
Wenn in den Tropfen frischerquickter Blätter

Die neue Sonne tausendfach sich spiegelt,
Und Iris freundlich bunt mit leichter Hand
Den grauen Flor der letzten Wolken trennt:
O, laßt mich auch an meiner Schwester Armen, 1355
An meines Freundes Brust, was ihr mir gönnt,
Mit vollem Dank genießen und behalten!
Es löset sich der Fluch, mir sagt's das Herz.
Die Eumeniden ziehn, ich höre sie,
Zum Tartarus und schlagen hinter sich 1360
Die ehrnen Thore fernabdonnernd zu.
Die Erde dampft erquickenden Geruch
Und ladet mich auf ihren Flächen ein,
Nach Lebensfreud' und großer That zu jagen.

Pylades.

Versäumt die Zeit nicht, die gemessen ist! 1365
Der Wind, der unsre Segel schwellt, er bringe
Erst unsre volle Freude zum Olymp!
Kommt! Es bedarf hier schnellen Rath und Schluß.

ARGUMENT.

ACT IV.

IPHIGENIA praises the mercy of the divine powers, who provide for man in the hour of trial, a thoughtful friend such as Pylades was, whom the Gods seem to have preserved for the rescue of Orestes. The two friends had hastened to the bay, where their comrades were lying concealed, and had supplied her with artful answers, if the King should urge the sacrifice. Her pure heart revolts, however, against uttering a falsehood, and her soul is troubled, when she sees a messenger from the King approaching (Sc. 1). Arkas appears and bids her speed the human sacrifice, but Iphigenia avers that the temple of Diana having been polluted by the presence of the elder of the strangers, who was guilty of murder and pursued by the furies, she must purify the image of the Goddess in the sea. Arkas asks Iphigenia not to commence the rite before he has announced the obstacle to the King, and again urges her to appease the irritated temper of the King by favouring his wooing, but she persists in her refusal, and Arkas retires to announce the occurrence to Thoas (Sc. 2). When left alone, Iphigenia gives expression to the revulsion produced in her heart by the words of the faithful Arkas, who had by his representations awakened her from her joyful illusion of happiness (Sc. 3).

Pylades appears and announces to Iphigenia that her brother was restored and that they had found their comrades with their ship concealed in a bay. They were all ready to leave

the shore and he asks Iphigenia to guide him to the temple, that he might carry away the image of Diana. The former informs him of the injunction of Arkas to await the King's decision about the intended ceremony, and that she feels considerable scruples in deceiving her fatherly benefactor. Pylades, however, declares that stern necessity commands her to save them (Sc. 4). Iphigenia bewails that the curse of the Gods will not leave the house of Tantalus, and she implores them to save her from betraying him to whom she owes her life (Sc. 5).

Vierter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Iphigenie

Denken die Himmlischen
Einem der Erdgebornen 1370
Viele Verwirrungen zu,
Und bereiten sie ihm
Von der Freude zu Schmerzen
Und von Schmerzen zur Freude
Tief erschütternden Uebergang: 1375
Dann erziehen sie ihm
In der Nähe der Stadt,
Oder am fernen Gestade,
Daß in Stunden der Noth
Auch die Hülfe bereit sei, 1380
Einen ruhigen Freund.

O segnet, Götter, unsern Pylades
Und was er immer unternehmen mag!
Er ist der Arm des Jünglings in der Schlacht,
Des Greises leuchtend Aug' in der Versammlung; 1385
Denn seine Seel' ist stille; sie bewahrt
Der Ruhe heil'ges, unerschöpftes Gut,
Und den Umhergetriebnen reichet er
Aus ihren Tiefen Rath und Hülfe. Mich

Riß er vom Bruder los; den staunt' ich an 1390
Und immer wieder an, und konnte mir
Das Glück nicht eigen machen, ließ ihn nicht
Aus meinen Armen los, und fühlte nicht
Die Nähe der Gefahr, die uns umgiebt.
Jetzt gehn sie, ihren Anschlag auszuführen, 1395
Der See zu, wo das Schiff mit den Gefährten,
In einer Bucht versteckt, aufs Zeichen lauert,
Und haben kluges Wort mir in den Mund
Gegeben, mich gelehrt, was ich dem König
Antworte, wenn er sendet und das Opfer 1400
Mir dringender gebietet. Ach, ich sehe wohl,
Ich muß mich leiten lassen wie ein Kind.
Ich habe nicht gelernt zu hinterhalten,
Noch Jemand etwas abzulisten. Weh,
O weh der Lüge! sie befreiet nicht, 1405
Wie jedes andre wahrgesprochne Wort,
Die Brust; sie macht uns nicht getrost, sie ängstet
Den, der sie heimlich schmiedet, und sie kehrt,
Ein losgedruckter Pfeil, von einem Gotte
Gewendet und versagend, sich zurück 1410
Und trifft den Schützen. Sorg' auf Sorge schwankt
Mir durch die Brust. Es greift die Furie
Vielleicht den Bruder auf dem Boden wieder
Des ungeweihten Ufers grimmig an.
Entdeckt man sie vielleicht? Mich dünkt, ich höre 1415
Gewaffnete sich nahen! — Hier! — Der Bote
Kommt von dem Könige mit schnellem Schritt.
Es schlägt mein Herz, es trübt sich meine Seele,
Da ich des Mannes Angesicht erblicke,
Dem ich mit falschem Wort begegnen soll. 1420

Zweiter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Arkas.

Arkas.

Beschleunige das Opfer, Priesterin!
Der König wartet, und es harrt das Volk.

Iphigenie.

Ich folgte meiner Pflicht und deinem Wink,
Wenn unvermuthet nicht ein Hinderniß
Sich zwischen mich und die Erfüllung stellte. 1425

Arkas.

Was ist's, das den Befehl des Königs hindert?

Iphigenie.

Der Zufall, dessen wir nicht Meister sind.

Arkas.

So sage mir's, daß ich's ihm schnell vermelde!
Denn er beschloß bei sich der Beiden Tod.

Iphigenie.

Die Götter haben ihn noch nicht beschlossen. 1430
Der ältste dieser Männer trägt die Schuld
Des nahverwandten Bluts, das er vergoß.
Die Furien verfolgen seinen Pfad,
Ja, in dem innern Tempel faßte selbst
Das Uebel ihn, und seine Gegenwart 1435
Entheiligte die reine Stätte. Nun
Eil' ich mit meinen Jungfrau'n, an dem Meere
Der Göttin Bild mit frischer Welle netzend,

Geheimnißvolle Weihe zu begehn.
Es störe Niemand unsern stillen Zug! 1440

Arkas.

Ich melde dieses neue Hinderniß
Dem Könige geschwind; beginne du
Das heil'ge Werk nicht eh, bis er's erlaubt!

Iphigenie.

Dies ist allein der Priest'rin überlassen.

Arkas.

Solch seltnen Fall soll auch der König wissen. 1445

Iphigenie.

Sein Rath wie sein Befehl verändert nichts.

Arkas.

Oft wird der Mächtige zum Schein gefragt.

Iphigenie.

Erdringe nicht, was ich versagen sollte!

Arkas.

Versage nicht, was gut und nützlich ist!

Iphigenie.

Ich gebe nach, wenn du nicht säumen willst. 1450

Arkas.

Schnell bin ich mit der Nachricht in dem Lager,
Und schnell mit seinen Worten hier zurück.
O, könnt' ich ihm noch eine Botschaft bringen,

Die Alles löste, was uns jetzt verwirrt!
Denn du hast nicht des Treuen Rath geachtet. 1455

Iphigenie.

Was ich vermochte, hab' ich gern gethan.

Arkas.

Noch änderst du den Sinn zur rechten Zeit.

Iphigenie.

Das steht nun einmal nicht in unsrer Macht.

Arkas.

Du hältst unmöglich, was dir Mühe kostet.

Iphigenie.

Dir scheint es möglich, weil der Wunsch dich trügt. 1460

Arkas.

Willst du denn Alles so gelassen wagen?

Iphigenie.

Ich hab' es in der Götter Hand gelegt.

Arkas.

Sie pflegen Menschen menschlich zu erretten.

Iphigenie.

Auf ihren Fingerzeig kommt Alles an.

Arkas.

Ich sage dir, es liegt in deiner Hand. 1465
Des Königs aufgebrachter Sinn allein
Bereitet diesen Fremden bittern Tod.

Das Heer entwöhnte längst vom harten Opfer
Und von dem blut'gen Dienste sein Gemüth.
Ja, Mancher, den ein widriges Geschick 1470
An fremdes Ufer trug, empfand es selbst,
Wie göttergleich dem armen Irrenden,
Umhergetrieben an der fremden Grenze,
Ein freundlich Menschenangesicht begegnet.
O, wende nicht von uns, was du vermagst! 1475
Du endest leicht, was du begonnen hast;
Denn nirgends baut die Milde, die herab
In menschlicher Gestalt vom Himmel kommt,
Ein Reich sich schneller, als wo trüb und wild
Ein neues Volk, voll Leben, Muth und Kraft, 1480
Sich selbst und banger Ahnung überlassen,
Des Menschenlebens schwere Bürden trägt.

Iphigenie.

Erschüttre meine Seele nicht, die du
Nach deinem Willen nicht bewegen kannst!

Arkas.

So lang' es Zeit ist, schont man weder Mühe, 1485
Noch eines guten Wortes Wiederholung.

Iphigenie.

Du machst dir Müh', und mir erregst du Schmerzen;
Vergebens Beides. Darum laß mich nun!

Arkas.

Die Schmerzen sind's, die ich zu Hülfe rufe;
Denn es sind Freunde, Gutes rathen sie. 1490

Iphigenie.

Sie fassen meine Seele mit Gewalt,
Doch tilgen sie den Widerwillen nicht.

Arkas.

Fühlt eine schöne Seele Widerwillen
Für eine Wohlthat, die der Edle reicht?

Iphigenie.

Ja, wenn der Edle, was sich nicht geziemt, 1495
Statt meines Dankes mich erwerben will.

Arkas.

Wer keine Neigung fühlt, dem mangelt es
An einem Worte der Entschuld'gung nie.
Dem Fürsten sag' ich an, was hier geschehn.
O, wiederholtest du in deiner Seele, 1500
Wie edel er sich gegen dich betrug,
Von deiner Ankunft an bis diesen Tag!

Dritter Auftritt.

Iphigenie (allein).

Von dieses Mannes Rede fühl' ich mir
Zur ungelegnen Zeit das Herz im Busen
Auf einmal umgewendet. Ich erschrecke! — 1505
Denn wie die Fluth, mit schnellen Strömen wachsend,
Die Felsen überspült, die in dem Sand
Am Ufer liegen, so bedeckte ganz
Ein Freudenstrom mein Innerstes. Ich hielt

In meinen Armen das Unmögliche. 1510
Es schien sich eine Wolke wieder sanft
Um mich zu legen, von der Erde mich
Emporzuheben und in jenen Schlummer
Mich einzuwiegen, den die gute Göttin
Um meine Schläfe legte, da ihr Arm 1515
Mich rettend faßte. — Meinen Bruder
Ergriff das Herz mit einziger Gewalt;
Ich horchte nur auf seines Freundes Rath;
Nur sie zu retten drang die Seele vorwärts.
Und wie den Klippen einer wüsten Insel 1520
Der Schiffer gern den Rücken wendet, so
Lag Tauris hinter mir. Nun hat die Stimme
Des treuen Manns mich wieder aufgeweckt,
Daß ich auch Menschen hier verlasse, mich
Erinnert. Doppelt wird mir der Betrug 1525
Verhaßt. O, bleibe ruhig, meine Seele!
Beginnst du nun zu schwanken und zu zweifeln?
Den festen Boden deiner Einsamkeit
Mußt du verlassen! Wieder eingeschifft,
Ergreifen dich die Wellen schaukelnd, trüb 1530
Und bang verkennest du die Welt und dich.

Vierter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Pylades.

Pylades.

Wo ist sie, daß ich ihr mit schnellen Worten
Die frohe Botschaft unsrer Rettung bringe?

Iphigenie.

Du siehst mich hier voll Sorgen und Erwartung
Des sichern Trostes, den du mir versprichst. 1535

Pylades.

Dein Bruder ist geheilt! Den Felsenboden
Des ungeweihten Ufers und den Sand
Betraten wir mit fröhlichen Gesprächen;
Der Hain blieb hinter uns, wir merkten's nicht.
Und herrlicher und immer herrlicher 1540
Umloderte der Jugend schöne Flamme
Sein lockig Haupt; sein volles Auge glühte
Von Muth und Hoffnung, und sein freies Herz
Ergab sich ganz der Freude, ganz der Lust,
Dich, seine Retterin, und mich zu retten. 1545

Iphigenie.

Gesegnet seist du, und es möge nie
Von deiner Lippe, die so Gutes sprach,
Der Ton des Leidens und der Klage tönen!

Pylades.

Ich bringe mehr als das; denn schön begleitet,
Gleich einem Fürsten, pflegt das Glück zu nahn. 1550
Auch die Gefährten haben wir gefunden.
In einer Felsenbucht verbargen sie
Das Schiff und saßen traurig und erwartend.
Sie sahen deinen Bruder, und es regten
Sich Alle jauchzend, und sie baten dringend, 1555
Der Abfahrt Stunde zu beschleunigen.
Es sehnet jede Faust sich nach dem Ruder,
Und selbst ein Wind erhob vom Lande lispelnd,

Von Allen gleich bemerkt, die holden Schwingen.
Drum laß uns eilen, führe mich zum Tempel, 1560
Laß mich das Heiligthum betreten, laß
Mich unsrer Wünsche Ziel verehrend fassen!
Ich bin allein genug, der Göttin Bild
Auf wohlgeübten Schultern wegzutragen;
Wie sehn' ich mich nach der erwünschten Last! 1565

(Er geht gegen den Tempel unter den letzten Worten, ohne zu bemerken daß Iphigenie nicht folgt; endlich kehrt er sich um.)

Du stehst und zauderst — Sage mir — Du schweigst!
Du scheinst verworren! Widersetzet sich
Ein neues Unheil unserm Glück? Sag' an!
Hast du dem Könige das kluge Wort
Vermelden lassen, das wir abgeredet? 1570

Iphigenie.

Ich habe, theurer Mann; doch wirst du schelten.
Ein schweigender Verweis war mir dein Anblick.
Des Königs Bote kam und wie du es
Mir in den Mund gelegt, so sagt' ich's ihm.
Er schien zu staunen, und verlangte dringend, 1575
Die seltne Feier erst dem Könige
Zu melden, seinen Willen zu vernehmen;
Und nun erwart' ich seine Wiederkehr.

Pylades.

Weh uns! Erneuert schwebt nun die Gefahr
Um unsre Schläfe! Warum hast du nicht 1580
Ins Priesterrecht dich weislich eingehüllt?

Iphigenie.

Als eine Hülle hab ich's nie gebraucht.

Pylades.

So wirst du, reine Seele, dich und uns
Zu Grunde richten. Warum dacht' ich nicht
Auf diesen Fall voraus, und lehrte dich, 1585
Auch dieser Fordrung auszuweichen!

Iphigenie.

Schilt
Nur mich! Die Schuld ist mein, ich fühl' es wohl;
Doch konnt' ich anders nicht dem Mann begegnen,
Der mit Vernunft und Ernst von mir verlangte,
Was ihm mein Herz als Recht gestehen mußte. 1590

Pylades.

Gefährlicher zieht sich's zusammen; doch auch so
Laß uns nicht zagen oder unbesonnen
Und übereilt uns selbst verrathen. Ruhig
Erwarte du die Wiederkunft des Boten,
Und dann steh' fest, er bringe, was er will! 1595
Denn solcher Weihung Feier anzuordnen,
Gehört der Priesterin und nicht dem König.
Und fordert er den fremden Mann zu sehn,
Der von dem Wahnsinn schwer belastet ist,
So lehn' es ab, als hieltest du uns Beide 1600
Im Tempel wohl verwahrt. So schaff' uns Luft,
Daß wir aufs Eiligste, den heil'gen Schatz
Dem rauh unwürd'gen Volk entwendend, fliehn.
Die besten Zeichen sendet uns Apoll,
Und, eh wir die Bedingung fromm erfüllen, 1605
Erfüllt er göttlich sein Versprechen schon.
Orest ist frei, geheilt! — Mit dem Befreiten
O führet uns hinüber, günst'ge Winde,

Zur Felseninsel, die der Gott bewohnt!
Dann nach Mycen, daß es lebendig werde, 1610
Daß von der Asche des verloschnen Herdes
Die Vatergötter fröhlich sich erheben,
Und schönes Feuer ihre Wohnungen
Umleuchte! Deine Hand soll ihnen Weihrauch
Zuerst aus goldnen Schalen streuen! Du 1615
Bringst über jene Schwelle Heil und Leben wieder,
Entsühnst den Fluch und schmückest neu die Deinen
Mit frischen Lebensblüthen herrlich aus.

Iphigenie.

Vernehm' ich dich, so wendet sich, o Theurer,
Wie sich die Blume nach der Sonne wendet, 1620
Die Seele, von dem Strahle deiner Worte
Getroffen, sich dem süßen Troste nach.
Wie köstlich ist des gegenwärt'gen Freundes
Gewisse Rede, deren Himmelskraft
Ein Einsamer entbehrt und still versinkt! 1625
Denn langsam reift, verschlossen in dem Busen,
Gedank' ihm und Entschluß; die Gegenwart
Des Liebenden entwickelte sie leicht.

Pylades.

Leb' wohl! Die Freunde will ich nun geschwind
Beruhigen, die sehnlich wartend harren. 1630
Dann komm' ich schnell zurück und lausche hier
Im Felsenbusch versteckt auf deinen Wink. —
Was sinnest du? Auf einmal überschwebt
Ein stiller Trauerzug die freie Stirne.

Iphigenie.

Verzeih! Wie leichte Wolken vor der Sonne, 1635
So zieht mir vor der Seele leichte Sorge
Und Bangigkeit vorüber.

Pylades.

Fürchte nicht!
Betrüglich schloß die Furcht mit der Gefahr
Ein enges Bündniß; beide sind Gesellen.

Iphigenie.

Die Sorge nenn' ich edel, die mich warnt, 1640
Den König, der mein zweiter Vater ward,
Nicht tückisch zu betrügen, zu berauben.

Pylades.

Der deinen Bruder schlachtet, dem entfliehst du.

Iphigenie.

Es ist derselbe, der mir Gutes that.

Pylades.

Das ist nicht Undank, was die Noth gebeut. 1645

Iphigenie.

Es bleibt wohl Undank; nur die Noth entschuldigt's.

Pylades.

Vor Göttern und vor Menschen dich gewiß.

Iphigenie.

Allein mein eigen Herz ist nicht befriedigt.

Pylades.

Zu strenge Fordrung ist verborgner Stolz.

Iphigenie.

Ich untersuche nicht, ich fühle nur. 1650

Pylades.

Fühlst du dich recht, so mußt du dich verehren.

Iphigenie.

Ganz unbefleckt genießt sich nur das Herz.

Pylades.

So hast du dich im Tempel wohl bewahrt;
Das Leben lehrt uns, weniger mit uns
Und Andern strenge sein; du lernst es auch. 1655
So wunderbar ist dies Geschlecht gebildet,
So vielfach ist's verschlungen und verknüpft,
Daß Keiner in sich selbst noch mit den Andern
Sich rein und unverworren halten kann.
Auch sind wir nicht bestellt, uns selbst zu richten; 1660
Zu wandeln und auf seinen Weg zu sehn,
Ist eines Menschen erste, nächste Pflicht;
Denn selten schätzt er recht, was er gethan,
Und was er thut, weiß er fast nie zu schätzen.

Iphigenie.

Fast überred'st du mich zu deiner Meinung. 1665

Pylades.

Braucht's Ueberredung, wo die Wahl versagt ist?
Den Bruder, dich, und einen Freund zu retten,
Ist nur ein Weg; fragt sich's, ob wir ihn gehen?

Iphigenie.

O, laß mich zaudern! Denn du thätest selbst
Ein solches Unrecht keinem Mann gelassen, 1670
Dem du für Wohlthat dich verpflichtet hieltest.

Pylades.

Wenn wir zu Grunde gehen, wartet dein
Ein härtrer Vorwurf, der Verzweiflung trägt.
Man sieht, du bist nicht an Verlust gewohnt,
Da du, dem großen Uebel zu entgehen, 1675
Ein falsches Wort nicht einmal opfern willst.

Iphigenie.

O, trüg' ich doch ein männlich Herz in mir!
Das, wenn es einen kühnen Vorsatz hegt,
Vor jeder andern Stimme sich verschließt!

Pylades.

Du weigerst dich umsonst; die eh'rne Hand 1680
Der Noth gebietet, und ihr ernster Wink
Ist oberstes Gesetz, dem Götter selbst
Sich unterwerfen müssen. Schweigend herrscht
Des ew'gen Schicksals unberathne Schwester.
Was sie dir auferlegt, das trage! Thu', 1685
Was sie gebeut! Das Andre weißt du. Bald
Komm ich zurück, aus deiner heil'gen Hand
Der Rettung schönes Siegel zu empfangen.

Fünfter Auftritt.

Iphigenie allein.

Ich muß ihm folgen; denn die Meinigen
Seh' ich in dringender Gefahr. Doch ach! 1690
Mein eigen Schicksal macht mir bang und bänger.
O, soll ich nicht die stille Hoffnung retten,
Die in der Einsamkeit ich schön genährt?
Soll dieser Fluch denn ewig walten? Soll
Nie dies Geschlecht mit einem neuen Segen 1695
Sich wieder heben? — Nimmt doch Alles ab!
Das beste Glück, des Lebens schönste Kraft
Ermattet endlich, warum nicht der Fluch?
So hofft' ich denn vergebens, hier verwahrt,
Von meines Hauses Schicksal abgeschieden, 1700
Dereinst mit reiner Hand und reinem Herzen
Die schwerbefleckte Wohnung zu entsühnen!
Kaum wird in meinen Armen mir ein Bruder
Vom grimm'gen Uebel wundervoll und schnell
Geheilt, kaum naht ein lang' erflehtes Schiff, 1705
Mich in den Port der Vaterwelt zu leiten,
So legt die taube Noth ein doppelt Laster
Mit eh'rner Hand mir auf: das heilige,
Mir anvertraute, vielverehrte Bild
Zu rauben und den Mann zu hintergehn, 1710
Dem ich mein Leben und mein Schicksal danke.
O, daß in meinem Busen nicht zuletzt
Ein Widerwille keime, der Titanen,
Der alten Götter tiefer Haß auf euch,
Olympier, nicht auch die zarte Brust 1715

Mit Geierklauen fasse! Rettet mich,
Und rettet euer Bild in meiner Seele!

Vor meinen Ohren tönt das alte Lied —
Vergessen hatt' ich's und vergaß es gern —
Das Lied der Parzen, das sie grausend sangen, 1720
Als Tantalus vom goldnen Stuhle fiel;
Sie litten mit dem edeln Freunde; grimmig
War ihre Brust, und furchtbar ihr Gesang.
In unsrer Jugend sang's die Amme mir
Und den Geschwistern vor, ich merkt es wohl. 1725

Es fürchte die Götter
Das Menschengeschlecht!
Sie halten die Herrschaft
In ewigen Händen,
Und können sie brauchen, 1730
Wie's ihnen gefällt.

Der fürchte sie doppelt,
Den je sie erheben!
Auf Klippen und Wolken
Sind Stühle bereitet 1735
Um goldene Tische.

Erhebet ein Zwist sich,
So stürzen die Gäste,
Geschmäht und geschändet,
In nächtliche Tiefen 1740
Und harren vergebens,
Im Finstern gebunden,
Gerechten Gerichtes.

Sie aber, sie bleiben
In ewigen Festen 1745

An goldenen Tischen.
Sie schreiten vom Berge
Zu Bergen hinüber;
Aus Schlünden der Tiefe
Dampft ihnen der Athem 1750
Erstickter Titanen,
Gleich Opfergerüchen,
Ein leichtes Gewölke.

Es wenden die Herrscher
Ihr segnendes Auge 1755
Von ganzen Geschlechtern,
Und meiden, im Enkel
Die ehmals geliebten
Still redenden Züge
Des Ahnherrn zu sehn. 1760

So sangen die Parzen;
Es horcht der Verbannte
In nächtlichen Höhlen,
Der Alte, die Lieder,
Denkt Kinder und Enkel 1765
Und schüttelt das Haupt.

ARGUMENT.

ACT V.

Arkas expresses his vague suspicion to Thoas that some secret plot was laid to effect the escape of the two captives, and the King commands him to summon the priestess to his presence and to make a strict search on the shore (Sc. 1). Thoas regrets the leniency and benevolence he has shown to Iphigenia, who, forgetful of his benefits, now seeks to carry out her designs by deceit (Sc. 2). The latter appears and expresses her resolve not to perform the cruel sacrifice, and finally, loth to have recourse to deception, she reveals to the King who the two captives were, for what purpose they had come to Tauris, and what plot had been laid for their rescue. In the midst of her supplication to Thoas to grant her and the two strangers their freedom (Sc. 3), she is interrupted by the sudden appearance of Orestes, who comes armed and summons her to speedy flight. Thoas bids him sheath his sword, and Iphigenia telling him that he stood in the presence of the King, confesses, at the same time, that she had revealed their meditated flight and thus freed her soul from treachery (Sc. 4)

Pylades and Arkas enter with drawn swords; the former urges Iphigenia and Orestes to follow him, and, on perceiving Thoas, asks whether he saw before him the sacred person of the King. Arkas assures the latter that only one word from his lips was required to set the ship of the strangers on fire; but Thoas commands that his enemies should be left unmolested, whilst he confers with Iphigenia and Orestes, and the latter asks Pylades to await calmly with their friends what the Gods had ordained for them (Sc. 5).

Orestes, being asked by Thoas to prove that he was the son of Agamemnon, produces the sword of the latter, and asks to be allowed to fight for the right of hospitality for the benefit of any strangers who might in future come to Tauris. The King is ready to accept the challenge himself, but Iphigenia interposes and proves to him that the stranger is her brother. Thoas asserts that the issue must still be decided by a combat, as he will never consent to give up the image of Diana, which the strangers had come to take away; but when Orestes declares that he now sees the error which had deluded them, and that the command of Apollo 'to bring back the sister to Greece' referred to his own sister and not to Diana, Thoas at length consents to the departure of the strangers, together with Iphigenia.

Fünfter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Thoas. Arkas.

Arkas.

Verwirrt muß ich gestehn, daß ich nicht weiß,
Wohin ich meinen Argwohn richten soll.
Sind's die Gefangnen, die auf ihre Flucht
Verstohlen sinnen? Ist's die Priesterin, 1770
Die ihnen hilft? Es mehrt sich das Gerücht,
Das Schiff, das diese Beiden hergebracht,
Sei irgend noch in einer Bucht versteckt.
Und jenes Mannes Wahnsinn, diese Weihe,
Der heil'ge Vorwand dieser Zög'rung, rufen 1775
Den Argwohn lauter und die Vorsicht auf.

Thoas.

Es komme schnell die Priesterin herbei!
Dann geht, durchsucht das Ufer scharf und schnell
Vom Vorgebirge bis zum Hain der Göttin!
Verschonet seine heil'gen Tiefen! Legt 1780
Bedächt'gen Hinterhalt und greift sie an!
Wo ihr sie findet, faßt sie, wie ihr pflegt!

Zweiter Auftritt.

Thoas allein.

Entsetzlich wechselt mir der Grimm im Busen,
Erst gegen sie, die ich so heilig hielt;
Dann gegen mich, der ich sie zum Verrath 1785
Durch Nachsicht und durch Güte bildete.
Zur Sklaverei gewöhnt der Mensch sich gut
Und lernet leicht gehorchen, wenn man ihn
Der Freiheit ganz beraubt. Ja, wäre sie
In meiner Ahnherrn rohe Hand gefallen, 1790
Und hätte sie der heil'ge Grimm verschont,
Sie wäre froh gewesen, sich allein
Zu retten, hätte dankbar ihr Geschick
Erkannt und fremdes Blut vor dem Altar
Vergossen, hätte Pflicht genannt, 1795
Was Noth war. Nun lockt meine Güte
In ihrer Brust verwegnen Wunsch herauf.
Vergebens hofft' ich, sie mir zu verbinden;
Sie sinnt sich nun ein eigen Schicksal aus.
Durch Schmeichelei gewann sie mir das Herz; 1800
Nun widersteh' ich der, so sucht sie sich
Den Weg durch List und Trug, und meine Güte
Scheint ihr ein altverjährtes Eigenthum.

Dritter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Thoas.

Iphigenie.

Du forderst mich; was bringt dich zu uns her?

Thoas.

Du schiebst das Opfer auf; sag' an, warum? 1805

Iphigenie.

Ich hab' an Arkas Alles klar erzählt.

Thoas.

Von dir möcht' ich es weiter noch vernehmen.

Iphigenie.

Die Göttin giebt dir Frist zur Ueberlegung.

Thoas.

Sie scheint dir selbst gelegen, diese Frist.

Iphigenie.

Wenn dir das Herz zum grausamen Entschluß 1810
Verhärtet ist, so solltest du nicht kommen!
Ein König, der Unmenschliches verlangt,
Find't Diener g'nug, die gegen Gnad' und Lohn
Den halben Fluch der That begierig fassen;
Doch seine Gegenwart bleibt unbefleckt. 1815
Er sinnt den Tod in einer schweren Wolke,
Und seine Boten bringen flammendes
Verderben auf des Armen Haupt hinab;
Er aber schwebt durch seine Höhen ruhig,
Ein unerreichter Gott im Sturme fort. 1820

Thoas.

Die heil'ge Lippe tönt ein wildes Lied.

Iphigenie.

Nicht Priesterin, nur Agamemnons Tochter.

Der Unbekannten Wort verehrtest du,
Der Fürstin willst du rasch gebieten? Nein!
Von Jugend auf hab' ich gelernt gehorchen, 1825
Erst meinen Eltern und dann einer Gottheit,
Und folgsam fühlt' ich immer meine Seele
Am schönsten frei; allein dem harten Worte,
Dem rauhen Ausspruch eines Mannes mich
Zu fügen, lernt' ich weder dort noch hier. 1830

Thoas.

Ein alt Gesetz, nicht ich, gebietet dir.

Iphigenie.

Wir fassen ein Gesetz begierig an,
Das unsrer Leidenschaft zur Waffe dient.
Ein andres spricht zu mir, ein älteres,
Mich dir zu widersetzen, das Gebot, 1835
Dem jeder Fremde heilig ist.

Thoas.

Es scheinen die Gefangnen dir sehr nah
Am Herzen; denn vor Antheil und Bewegung
Vergissest du der Klugheit erstes Wort:
Daß man den Mächtigen nicht reizen soll. 1840

Iphigenie.

Red' oder schweig' ich, immer kannst du wissen,
Was mir im Herzen ist und immer bleibt.
Löst die Erinnerung des gleichen Schicksals
Nicht ein verschloßnes Herz zum Mitleid auf?
Wie mehr denn mein's! In ihnen seh' ich mich. 1845
Ich habe vorm Altare selbst gezittert,

Und feierlich umgab der frühe Tod
Die Knieende; das Messer zuckte schon,
Den lebenvollen Busen zu durchbohren;
Mein Innerstes entsetzte wirbelnd sich, 1850
Mein Auge brach, und — ich fand mich gerettet.
Sind wir, was Götter gnädig uns gewährt,
Unglücklichen nicht zu erstatten schuldig?
Du weißt es, kennst mich, und du willst mich zwingen!

Thoas.

Gehorche deinem Dienste, nicht dem Herrn! 1855

Iphigenie.

Laß ab! Beschönige nicht die Gewalt,
Die sich der Schwachheit eines Weibes freut.
Ich bin so frei geboren als ein Mann.
Stünd' Agamemnons Sohn dir gegenüber,
Und du verlangtest, was sich nicht gebührt: 1860
So hat auch er ein Schwert und einen Arm,
Die Rechte seines Busens zu vertheid'gen.
Ich habe nichts als Worte, und es ziemt
Dem edeln Mann, der Frauen Wort zu achten.

Thoas.

Ich acht' es mehr als eines Bruders Schwert. 1865

Iphigenie.

Das Loos der Waffen wechselt hin und her;
Kein kluger Streiter hält den Feind gering.
Auch ohne Hülfe gegen Trutz und Härte
Hat die Natur den Schwachen nicht gelassen;
Sie gab zur List ihm Freude, lehrt' ihn Künste; 1870

Bald weicht er aus, verspätet und umgeht.
Ja, der Gewaltige verdient, daß man sie übt.

Thoas.

Die Vorsicht stellt der List sich klug entgegen.

Iphigenie.

Und eine reine Seele braucht sie nicht.

Thoas.

Sprich unbehutsam nicht dein eigen Urtheil! 1875

Iphigenie.

O, sähest du, wie meine Seele kämpft,
Ein bös Geschick, das sie ergreifen will,
Im ersten Anfall muthig abzutreiben!
So steh' ich denn hier wehrlos gegen dich?
Die schöne Bitte, den anmuth'gen Zweig, 1880
In einer Frauen Hand gewaltiger
Als Schwert und Waffe, stößest du zurück;
Was bleibt mir nun, mein Innres zu vertheid'gen?
Ruf' ich die Göttin um ein Wunder an?
Ist keine Kraft in meiner Seele Tiefen? 1885

Thoas.

Es scheint, der beiden Fremden Schicksal macht
Unmäßig dich besorgt. Wer sind sie, sprich,
Für die dein Geist gewaltig sich erhebt?

Iphigenie.

Sie sind — sie scheinen — für Griechen halt' ich sie.

Thoas.

Landsleute sind es? Und sie haben wohl 1890
Der Rückkehr schönes Bild in dir erneut?

Iphigenie (nach einigem Stillschweigen).

Hat denn zur unerhörten That der Mann
Allein das Recht? Drückt denn Unmögliches
Nur er an die gewalt'ge Heldenbrust?
Was nennt man groß? Was hebt die Seele schaudernd 1895
Dem immer wiederholenden Erzähler,
Als was mit unwahrscheinlichem Erfolg
Der Muthigste begann? Der in der Nacht
Allein das Heer des Feindes überschleicht,
Wie unversehen eine Flamme wüthend 1900
Die Schlafenden, Erwachenden ergreift,
Zuletzt, gedrängt von den Ermunterten
Auf Feindes Pferden, doch mit Beute kehrt,
Wird der allein gepriesen? Der allein,
Der, einen sichern Weg verachtend, kühn 1905
Gebirg' und Wälder durchzustreifen geht,
Daß er von Räubern eine Gegend säubre?
Ist uns nichts übrig? Muß ein zartes Weib
Sich ihres angebor'nen Rechts entäußern,
Wild gegen Wilde sein, wie Amazonen 1910
Das Recht des Schwerts euch rauben und mit Blute
Die Unterdrückung rächen? Auf und ab
Steigt in der Brust ein kühnes Unternehmen;
Ich werde großem Vorwurf nicht entgehn,
Noch schwerem Uebel, wenn es mir mißlingt; 1915
Allein euch leg' ich's auf die Kniee! Wenn
Ihr wahrhaft seid, wie ihr gepriesen werdet,

So zeigt's durch euren Beistand und verherrlicht
Durch mich die Wahrheit! — Ja, vernimm, o König,
Es wird ein heimlicher Betrug geschmiedet; 1920
Vergebens fragst du den Gefangnen nach;
Sie sind hinweg und suchen ihre Freunde,
Die mit dem Schiff am Ufer warten, auf.
Der Aelt'ste, den das Uebel hier ergriffen
Und nun verlassen hat — es ist Orest, 1925
Mein Bruder, und der andre sein Vertrauter,
Sein Jugendfreund, mit Namen Pylades.
Apoll schickt sie von Delphi diesem Ufer
Mit göttlichen Befehlen zu, das Bild
Dianens wegzurauben und zu ihm 1930
Die Schwester hinzubringen, und dafür
Verspricht er dem von Furien Verfolgten,
Des Mutterblutes Schuldigen, Befreiung.
Uns Beide hab' ich nun, die Ueberbliebnen
Von Tantal's Haus, in deine Hand gelegt: 1935
Verdirb uns — wenn du darfst!

Thoas.

Du glaubst, es höre
Der rohe Scythe, der Barbar, die Stimme
Der Wahrheit und der Menschlichkeit, die Atreus,
Der Grieche, nicht vernahm?

Iphigenie.

Es hört sie Jeder,
Geboren unter jedem Himmel, dem 1940
Des Lebens Quelle durch den Busen rein
Und ungehindert fließt. — Was sinnst du mir,
O König, schweigend in der tiefen Seele?

Ist es Verderben? So tödte mich zuerst!
Denn nun empfind' ich, da uns keine Rettung 1945
Mehr übrig bleibt, die gräßliche Gefahr,
Worein ich die Geliebten übereilt
Vorsätzlich stürzte. Weh, ich werde sie
Gebunden vor mir sehn! Mit welchen Blicken
Kann ich von meinem Bruder Abschied nehmen, 1950
Den ich ermorde? Nimmer kann ich ihm
Mehr in die vielgeliebten Augen schaun!

Thoas.

So haben die Betrüger, künstlich dichtend,
Der lang Verschloßnen, ihre Wünsche leicht
Und willig Glaubenden, ein solch Gespinnst 1955
Ums Haupt geworfen!

Iphigenie.

Nein, o König, nein!
Ich könnte hintergangen werden; diese
Sind treu und wahr. Wirst du sie anders finden,
So laß sie fallen und verstoße mich,
Verbanne mich zur Strafe meiner Thorheit 1960
An einer Klippeninsel traurig Ufer!
Ist aber dieser Mann der lang' erflehte,
Geliebte Bruder, so entlaß uns, sei
Auch den Geschwistern wie der Schwester freundlich!
Mein Vater fiel durch seiner Frauen Schuld, 1965
Und sie durch ihren Sohn. Die letzte Hoffnung
Von Atreus' Stamme ruht auf ihm allein.
Laß mich mit reinem Herzen, reiner Hand
Hinübergehn und unser Haus entsühnen!
Du hältst mir Wort. — Wenn zu den Meinen je 1970

Mir Rückkehr zubereitet wäre, schwurst
Du, mich zu lassen; und sie ist es nun.
Ein König sagt nicht wie gemeine Menschen
Verlegen zu, daß er den Bittenden
Auf einen Augenblick entferne, noch
Verspricht er auf den Fall, den er nicht hofft;
Dann fühlt er erst die Höhe seiner Würde,
Wenn er den Harrenden beglücken kann.

Thoas.

Unwillig, wie sich Feuer gegen Wasser
Im Kampfe wehrt und gischend seinen Feind
Zu tilgen sucht, so wehret sich der Zorn
In meinem Busen gegen deine Worte.

Iphigenie.

O, laß die Gnade, wie das heil'ge Licht
Der stillen Opferflamme mir, umkränzt
Von Lobgesang und Dank und Freude, lodern!

Thoas.

Wie oft besänftigte mich diese Stimme!

Iphigenie.

O, reiche mir die Hand zum Friedenszeichen!

Thoas.

Du forderst viel in einer kurzen Zeit.

Iphigenie.

Um Guts zu thun, braucht's keiner Ueberlegung.

Thoas.

Sehr viel, denn auch dem Guten folgt das Uebel. 1990

Iphigenie.

Der Zweifel ist's, der Gutes böse macht.
Bedenke nicht! Gewähre, wie du's fühlst!

Vierter Auftritt.

Orest gewaffnet. Die Vorigen.

Orest (nach der Scene gekehrt).

Verdoppelt eure Kräfte! Haltet sie
Zurück! Nur wenig Augenblicke! Weicht
Der Menge nicht, und deckt den Weg zum Schiffe 1995
Mir und der Schwester! (Zu Iphigenien, ohne den König zu sehen.)
Komm, wir sind verrathen.
Geringer Raum bleibt uns zur Flucht. Geschwind!

(Er erblickt den König.)

Thoas (nach dem Schwerte greifend).

In meiner Gegenwart führt ungestraft
Kein Mann das nackte Schwert.

Iphigenie.

Entheiliget
Der Göttin Wohnung nicht durch Wuth und Mord! 2000
Gebietet eurem Volke Stillstand, höret
Die Priesterin, die Schwester!

Orest.

Sage mir!
Wer ist es, der uns droht?

Iphigenie.

Verehr in ihm
Den König, der mein zweiter Vater ward!
Verzeih mir, Bruder! Doch mein kindlich Herz 2005
Hat unser ganz Geschick in seine Hand
Gelegt. Gestanden hab' ich euren Anschlag,
Und meine Seele vom Verrath gerettet.

Orest.

Will er die Rückkehr friedlich uns gewähren?

Iphigenie.

Dein blinkend Schwert verbietet mir die Antwort. 2010

Orest (der das Schwert einsteckt).

So sprich! Du siehst, ich horche deinen Worten.

Fünfter Auftritt.

Die Vorigen. Pylades, bald nach ihm Arkas; beide mit bloßen Schwertern.

Pylades.

Verweilet nicht! Die letzten Kräfte raffen
Die Unsrigen zusammen; weichend werden
Sie nach der See langsam zurückgedrängt.
Welch ein Gespräch der Fürsten find' ich hier! 2015
Dies ist des Königes verehrtes Haupt!

Arkas.

Gelassen, wie es dir, o König, ziemt,
Stehst du den Feinden gegenüber. Gleich
Ist die Verwegenheit bestraft; es weicht

Und fällt ihr Anhang, und ihr Schiff ist unser. 2020
Ein Wort von dir, so steht's in Flammen.

Thoas.

Geh,
Gebiete Stillstand meinem Volke! Keiner
Beschädige den Feind, so lang, wir reden! (Arkas ab.)

Orest.

Ich nehm' es an. Geh sammle, treuer Freund,
Den Rest des Volkes! Harret still, welch Ende 2025
Die Götter unsern Thaten zubereiten! (Pylades ab.)

Sechster Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Thoas. Orest.

Iphigenie.

Befreit von Sorge mich, eh' ihr zu sprechen
Beginnet! Ich befürchte bösen Zwist,
Wenn du, o König, nicht der Billigkeit
Gelinde Stimme hörest, du, mein Bruder, 2030
Der raschen Jugend nicht gebieten willst.

Thoas.

Ich halte meinen Zorn, wie es dem Aeltern
Geziemt, zurück. Antworte mir! Womit
Bezeugst du, daß du Agamemnons Sohn
Und Dieser Bruder bist?

Orest.

Hier ist das Schwert, 2035
Mit dem er Troja's tapfre Männer schlug.

Dies nahm ich seinem Mörder ab, und bat
Die Himmlischen, den Muth und Arm, das Glück
Des großen Königes mir zu verleihn,
Und einen schönern Tod mir zu gewähren. 2040
Wähl' einen aus den Edeln deines Heers
Und stelle mir den Besten gegenüber!
So weit die Erde Heldensöhne nährt,
Ist keinem Fremdling dies Gesuch verweigert.

Thoas.

Dies Vorrecht hat die alte Sitte nie 2045
Dem Fremden hier gestattet.

Orest.

So beginne
Die neue Sitte denn von dir und mir!
Nachahmend heiliget ein ganzes Volk
Die edle That der Herrscher zum Gesetz.
Und laß mich nicht allein für unsre Freiheit, 2050
Laß mich, den Fremden, für die Fremden kämpfen!
Fall' ich, so ist ihr Urtheil mit dem meinen
Gesprochen; aber gönnet mir das Glück
Zu überwinden, so betrete nie
Ein Mann dies Ufer, dem der schnelle Blick 2055
Hülfreicher Liebe nicht begegnet, und
Getröstet scheide Jeglicher hinweg!

Thoas.

Nicht unwerth scheinest du, o Jüngling, mir
Der Ahnherrn, deren du dich rühmst, zu sein.
Groß ist die Zahl der edeln, tapfern Männer, 2060
Die mich begleiten; doch ich stehe selbst

In meinen Jahren noch dem Feinde, bin
Bereit, mit dir der Waffen Loos zu wagen.

Iphigenie.

Mit nichten! Dieses blutigen Beweises
Bedarf es nicht, o König! Laßt die Hand 2065
Vom Schwerte! Denkt an mich und mein Geschick!
Der rasche Kampf verewigt einen Mann;
Er falle gleich, so preiset ihn das Lied.
Allein die Thränen, die unendlichen,
Der überbliebnen, der verlaßnen Frau, 2070
Zählt keine Nachwelt, und der Dichter schweigt
Von tausend durchgeweinten Tag= und Nächten,
Wo eine stille Seele den verlornen,
Rasch abgeschiednen Freund vergebens sich
Zurückzurufen bangt und sich verzehrt. 2075
Mich selbst hat eine Sorge gleich gewarnt,
Daß der Betrug nicht eines Räubers mich
Vom sichern Schutzort reiße, mich der Knechtschaft
Verrathe. Fleißig hab' ich sie befragt,
Nach jedem Umstand mich erkundigt, Zeichen 2080
Gefordert, und gewiß ist nun mein Herz.
Sieh hier an seiner rechten Hand das Mal
Wie von drei Sternen, das am Tage schon,
Da er geboren ward, sich zeigte, das
Auf schwere That, mit dieser Faust zu üben, 2085
Der Priester deutete. Dann überzeugt
Mich doppelt diese Schramme, die ihm hier
Die Augenbraue spaltet. Als ein Kind
Ließ ihn Elektra, rasch und unvorsichtig
Nach ihrer Art, aus ihren Armen stürzen. 2090
Er schlug auf einen Dreifuß auf. — Er ist's! —

Soll ich dir noch die Aehnlichkeit des Vaters,
Soll ich das innre Jauchzen meines Herzens
Dir auch als Zeugen der Versichrung nennen?

Thoas.

Und hübe deine Rede jeden Zweifel, 2095
Und bändigt' ich den Zorn in meiner Brust,
So würden doch die Waffen zwischen uns
Entscheiden müssen; Frieden seh' ich nicht.
Sie sind gekommen, du bekennest selbst,
Das heil'ge Bild der Göttin mir zu rauben. 2100
Glaubt ihr, ich sehe dies gelassen an?
Der Grieche wendet oft sein lüstern Auge
Den fernen Schätzen der Barbaren zu,
Dem goldnen Felle, Pferden, schönen Töchtern;
Doch führte sie Gewalt und List nicht immer 2105
Mit den erlangten Gütern glücklich heim.

Orest.

Das Bild, o König, soll uns nicht entzweien!
Jetzt kennen wir den Irrthum, den ein Gott
Wie einen Schleier um das Haupt uns legte,
Da er den Weg hierher uns wandern hieß. 2110
Um Rath und um Befreiung bat ich ihn
Von dem Geleit der Furien; er sprach:
„Bringst du die Schwester, die an Tauris' Ufer
Im Heiligthume wider Willen bleibt,
Nach Griechenland, so löset sich der Fluch." 2115
Wir legten's von Apollens Schwester aus,
Und er gedachte dich! Die strengen Bande
Sind nun gelöst; du bist den Deinen wieder,
Du Heilige, geschenkt. Von dir berührt,
War ich geheilt; in deinen Armen faßte 2120

Das Uebel mich mit allen seinen Klauen
Zum letztenmal, und schüttelte das Mark
Entsetzlich mir zusammen; dann entfloh's
Wie eine Schlange zu der Höhle. Neu
Genieß' ich nun durch dich das weite Licht 2125
Des Tages. Schön und herrlich zeigt sich mir
Der Göttin Rath. Gleich einem heil'gen Bilde,
Daran der Stadt unwandelbar Geschick
Durch ein geheimes Götterwort gebannt ist,
Nahm sie dich weg, die Schützerin des Hauses, 2130
Bewahrte dich in einer heil'gen Stille
Zum Segen deines Bruders und der Deinen.
Da alle Rettung auf der weiten Erde
Verloren schien, giebst du uns Alles wieder.
Laß deine Seele sich zum Frieden wenden, 2135
O König! Hindre nicht daß sie die Weihe
Des väterlichen Hauses nun vollbringe,
Mich der entsühnten Halle wiedergebe,
Mir auf das Haupt die alte Krone drücke!
Vergilt den Segen, den sie dir gebracht, 2140
Und laß des nähern Rechtes mich genießen!
Gewalt und List, der Männer höchster Ruhm,
Wird durch die Wahrheit dieser hohen Seele
Beschämt, und reines, kindliches Vertrauen
Zu einem edeln Manne wird belohnt. 2145

Iphigenie.

Denk' an dein Wort, und laß durch diese Rede
Aus einem graden, treuen Munde dich
Bewegen! Sieh uns an! Du hast nicht oft
Zu solcher edeln That Gelegenheit.
Versagen kannst du's nicht; gewähr' es bald! 2150

Thoas.

So geht!

Iphigenie.

Nicht so, mein König! Ohne Segen,
In Widerwillen scheid' ich nicht von dir.
Verbann' uns nicht! Ein freundlich Gastrecht walte
Von dir zu uns; so sind wir nicht auf ewig
Getrennt und abgeschieden. Werth und theuer, 2155
Wie mir mein Vater war, so bist du's mir,
Und dieser Eindruck bleibt in meiner Seele.
Bringt der Geringste deines Volkes je
Den Ton der Stimme mir ins Ohr zurück,
Den ich an euch gewohnt zu hören bin, 2160
Und seh' ich an dem Aermsten eure Tracht,
Empfangen will ich ihn wie einen Gott,
Ich will ihm selbst ein Lager zubereiten,
Auf einen Stuhl ihn an das Feuer laden,
Und nur nach dir und deinem Schicksal fragen. 2165
O, geben dir die Götter deiner Thaten
Und deiner Milde wohlverdienten Lohn!
Leb' wohl! O wende dich zu uns und gieb
Ein holdes Wort des Abschieds mir zurück!
Dann schwellt der Wind die Segel sanfter an, 2170
Und Thränen fließen lindernder vom Auge
Des Scheidenden. Leb' wohl! und reiche mir
Zum Pfand der alten Freundschaft deine Rechte!

Thoas.

Lebt wohl!



NOTES.

Erster Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

The sacred ground surrounding the Greek temples used to be planted with a grove. In such a grove, in front of the temple of Diana, the scene of the present drama is placed; in accordance with the structure of ancient Greek plays, the action of which generally passed in the open air.

The temple of Diana here mentioned may be assumed to be that which forms the scene of action of the 'Iphigenia in Tauris' by Euripides, and which stood at the 'now historic Balaclava' in the Crimea, the *Chersonesus Taurica* of ancient times[1].

ll. 1–9. Although kept by the will of heaven in the temple of Diana for many a year, the mind of Iphigenia does not become familiar with the silent sanctuary of the goddess, and she still feels the awe with which the mysterious rustling in the waving tree-tops inspired her, when she first stepped forth into the shades of the grove.

l. 1. It must be supposed that Iphigenia begins her soliloquy, not when in the act of coming out of the temple, but when already in the grove, for which reason she uses the expression heraus, and not hinaus. Cp. *note* to l. 4.

Wipfel, is here used poetically for 'trees.' Rege Wipfel forms an antithesis to stilles Heiligthum (l. 3).

l. 2. Dichtbelaubten, 'having dense foliage;' 'leafy.' Cp. the Greek πυκνόφυλλος.

l. 4. Schaudernbes Gefühl stands here for Schauer, 'awe,'

[1] Those readers, who are not perfectly familiar with the subject of this drama, should, before attempting to read it, make themselves acquainted with the *General Introduction*.

'feeling of awe.' [1]P. V. i. has: Heraus in eure Schatten, ewig rege Wipfel des heiligen Hains, hinein ins Heiligthum der Göttin . . . tret' ich mit immer neuem Schauer, etc.

l. 5. Sie refers to Schatten (l. 1).

l. 6. The Gram. Subj. es need here, of course, not be translated. Some editions have hieher for hierher.

l. 9. Iphigenia still feels herself a stranger, as in the first year of her sojourn in the temple.

l. 11. The epithet lange conveys here the notion of 'weary.'

ll. 13, 14. All the response, which the waves bring to her sighs, consists of roaring hollow sounds.

The above lines, which occur for the first time in the last version of the drama, were evidently suggested to Goethe by the aspect of the Lake of Garda (Lat. Benacus) which, as he states in his Italienische Reise (Torbole, 12 Sept. 1786), was so agitated by a strong wind, that high waves rolled against the shore, and made him realize the meaning of the Virgilian verse: 'Fluctibus et fremitu resonans Benace marino' (*Georg.* ii. 160).

A few months later he wrote from Rome (6 Jan. 1787), with reference tō this drama; Am Gardasee, als der gewaltige Mittagswind die Wellen ans Ufer trieb, wo ich wenigstens so allein war als meine Heldin am Gestade von Tauris, zog ich die e r s t e n Linien der neuen Bearbeitung.

l. 16, &c. That deep grief snatches away from man the cup of happiness, before it has reached his lips, is a poetical simile probably derived from the fate of Tantalus, the ancestor of Iphigenia. P. V. i. has: Ihn läßt der Gram des schönsten Glückes nicht genießen.

l. 18. Ihm . . . die = seine. It is an idiomatic peculiarity in German, as in some other languages, to point out the personal relation by the dative of the personal pronoun, instead of by the possessive pronoun, usually employed in English.

Abwärts is here synonymous with fernab, 'afar.'

l. 19. The attributive genitive seines Vaters, &c., must be resolved into seine väterlichen, &c. Halle, poetical for Haus The P. V. had Wohnung.

l. 21. Mitgeborne denotes 'persons born of the same parents,' and is used in poetry for Geschwister, i.e. brothers and sisters. Cp. the Greek *σύγγονοι*, and the Latin *cognati*.

The poetical comparative form fest und fester for immer fester und fester is, with Goethe, of frequent occurrence.

[1] P. V. i, ii, respectively stand for the first and second Prose Version *of the drama.*

l. 24. The helpless position of a woman in foreign lands, is acutely felt by Iphigenia in her present condition.

l. 28. When a man falls on the field of battle his death is honourable.—P. V. i. has: und haben ihm die Götter Unglück zubereitet, fällt er, der Erstling von den Seinen in den schönen Tod. Cp. Eur. Iph. Taur. l. 1005 &c.

οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐκ δόμων
θανὼν ποθεινός, τὰ δὲ γυναικὸς ἀσθενῆ.

l. 29, &c. Woman's fate is closely confined; for *merely* to obey a harsh husband, must be a gratifying duty to her, and how much more miserable must she be, &c. Cp. Eur. Andr. l. 213, &c.

χρὴ γὰρ γυναῖκα, κἂν κακῷ δοθῇ πόσει,
στέργειν.

l. 33, &c. Iphigenia now proceeds to illustrate the helplessness of woman by her own fate; and because she is compelled to perform the duties of priestess, she calls her bondage both stern and sacred.

ll. 36–39. Iphigenia serves her rescuer dutifully, though with calm reluctance; but her life should be devoted to the goddess from gratitude, in voluntary service. Her sincere devotion to the goddess is, however, shown by the fact that she still rests her hope on her.

l. 41. Agamemnon was chief commander of the Greeks, and his dignity, power, and majesty placed him above all other kings. Hence he might well be called 'the greatest king,' 'the august man' (l. 43), and 'godlike' (l. 45); the latter epithet (ἰσόθεος), being applied by Homer to eminent heroes, and by the Greek tragic poets to kings.

l. 46. Goethe makes Iphigenia speak here far more modestly than Euripides does, who puts in her mouth the self-complacent boast, that her father 'gave her the prize of beauty' (τὸ καλλιστεῖον εἰς ἔμ' ἀναφέρων, Iph. Taur. l. 23) in offering her as a sacrifice to Artemis. In Iph. Aul. however, the Greek poet makes Clytemnestra speak of Iphigenia, 'as loving her father more than all his other children did' (φιλοπάτωρ δ' ἀεί ποτ' εἶ μάλιστα παίδων τῶνδ' ὅσους ἐγὼ 'τεκον, l. 638 &c.). It may, therefore, be assumed, that he too 'prized her most.'

l. 47. The expression, umgewandte Mauern, 'overturned walls,' used in higher diction to denote the total ruin or demolition of a city, is of classical origin. Cp. mœnia vertere, &c.—P. V. i. has: Vom Felde der umgewandten Troja.

l. 48. The wrath of Diana having been appeased, Iphigenia could assume, that the goddess led her father, covered with glory, to his home.

l. 49. Goethe has omitted the mention of Chrysothemis, the third daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, as she does not enter, either directly or indirectly, into the plot of the drama. She plays a not very brilliant part in Sophocles' 'Electra' and Euripides mentions her only once (Or. l. 23).

l. 50. Die schönen Schätze refers to those mentioned in the preceding line.

l. 51, &c. Cp. Eur. Iph. Taur. l. 1082:

ὦ πότνι', ἥπερ μ' Αὐλίδος κατὰ πτυχὰς
δεινῆς ἔσωσας ἐκ πατροκτόνου χερὸς,
σῶσόν με καὶ νῦν, &c.

Zweiter Auftritt.

l. 54. The obsolete form beut from bieten is now used in poetry only.

l. 59. For the expected arrival of the king at the temple the verb kommen is here used, whilst the mere approach of the whole body of the army is expressed by the verb nahen.

l. 61. Iphigenia wishes at once to guard herself against any 'cruel' offering, revolting to herself and unwelcome to the goddess Diana. Cp. p. 26, ll. 520–527.

l. 72, &c. Iphigenia had shrouded her feelings in a gloomy, awe-inspiring reserve, and her soul was therefore as if 'locked up with iron bands in her innermost heart.'

Die Seele . . . dir. Cp. note to l. 18.

l. 74. Euripides makes Iphigenia say (Iph. Taur. l. 218):

νῦν δ' ἀξείνου πόντου ξεῖνα
δυσχόρτους οἴκους ναίω
ἄγαμος, ἄτεκνος, ἄπολις, ἄφιλος.

l. 76. The antithesis here will be brought out in English by rendering Vaterland by 'native land' and Fremde by 'foreign soil.'

l. 81, &c. P. V. i. has: (da) . . . die neuen Schößlinge in lieblicher Gesellschaft von den Füßen der alten Stämme gen Himmel strebten, &c. i. e. 'when the young shoots, in sweet union, strove heavenwards from the foot of the old stems.'

The expression in lieblicher Gesellschaft was transformed in the poetical version into the *Hendiadys*, gesellt und lieblich.

l. 84. An 'alien curse' weighed upon Iphigenia, because she suffered from the deeds of her ancestors, and more especially from the guilt of Helena. Somewhat in this sense Euripides makes Orestes say (Iph. Taur. l. 566), *κακῆς γυναικὸς χάριν ἄχαριν ἀπώλετο.*

l. 86. The figurative expression eherne Faust corresponds to

the English 'iron hand'; ehern, lit. 'brazen,' being frequently used by Goethe, and other German poets, for 'hard,' 'strong,' 'unrelenting,' &c. Düntzer refers here to the figurative use of the Greek *χάλκεος*.

Youth's finest joy consists in the healthy and prosperous growth during the first years of life.

l. 88. Selbst gerettet &c. The joy of life having left her for ever, she was no more her former self, but only her own shadow, even after she had been saved.

Iphigenia's comparison of herself to a mere shadow of a departed person, is more fully developed by her further on, l. 107, &c.

l. 99. The miraculous manner of Iphigenia's arrival at Tauris made Thoas consider her as one 'given to him by the gods.' Cp. further on, l. 140.

l. 104. Stufe is here used poetically for 'altar.'

l. 106. machen here for ausmachen, 'to constitute.'

l. 108. Gleich einem, &c. This simile is derived from the belief of the Greeks, that the spirits of wicked persons were obliged to hover restlessly round their own graves.

l. 109. Vertrauern, 'to mourn out;' 'to spend in mourning.' Note the force of the prefix ver in the present instance.

ll. 110–14. Iphigenia cannot call hers a life of heart-felt joy, since she must consider every day uselessly spent by her in mere dreams, as a preparation only for the time, when she will have ceased to live; namely 'for those grey days, which are spent in idleness, on the shore of Lethe, by the melancholy and unconscious host of the departed.'

Homer describes the nether world as being filled with gloomy darkness (zu jenen grauen Tagen), and the souls, or shades of the departed as living on sadly and idly in a state of dreamy half-consciousness (selbstvergessend) after having drunk from the waters of Lethe, i. e. the river of forgetfulness. Cp. Od. xi. 15, 222, 489, &c.

The verb feiern (l. 114) is here used in the sense of 'to spend in idleness.'

l. 116. The thought contained in this line must be connected with Iphigenia's description of woman's fate, in general, in her soliloquy. P. V. i. has: meist ist das des Weibes Schicksal, und vor Allem meins.

l. 117. Gnügest by syncope for genügest.

l. 119. Anyone who does good and is not satisfied with himself, is deprived of the real enjoyment of life.

l. 124. Sein Leben blutend lassen is a poetical expression for 'to die' (as a sacrifice).

l. 131. That victory 'flies with joyous wing' round a successful army, and even precedes its march, seems to be a simple enough poetical simile, and it is hardly necessary to assume, as some commentators have done, that the poet alluded here specially to *Nike*, 'the goddess of victory,' who is represented as winged, or to a particular tutelary deity granting victory to an army.

l. 135, &c. Sich—erfreut, 'is inspired by mild benignity in thy presence.'

l. 138. The beneficial influence of Iphigenia's presence is compared by Arkas to a soothing balm.

l. 140, &c. The following four lines are a recapitulation of the whole speech of Arkas.

l. 142. The term unwirthbar, in the present sense, seems to be applicable to places only, and is somewhat more expressive than ungastlich, 'inhospitable,' which is used both of persons and places.

The expression *ἄξενος* is used by Euripides with reference to Tauris (Iph. Taur. l. 94), and also of the sea (ibid. l. 341) surrounding the country.

l. 144, &c. The little we have accomplished looks like nothing, when we consider how much good there is yet to be done.

l. 148, &c. Arkas admonishes Iphigenia to self-recognition; for we blame alike those who proudly depreciate their own real merit, and those who conceitedly extol their 'spurious worth.'—It is perhaps not quite out of place to quote here Goethe's well-known, though generally wrongly quoted, saying:

Nur die Lumpe sind bescheiden,
Brave freuen sich der That.

l. 161. Folger is not unfrequently used in higher diction, by Goethe and other German poets, for Nachfolger.

l. 164. The Scythians were known to the Greeks as a laconic people, who 'did not set any value on fine forms of speech.'

The Taurians proper are said to have been the remnants of the Cimmerii, who were driven from the country by the Scythians. It must, therefore, be supposed that they amalgamated, in the course of time, with the latter.

ll. 165–168. Thoas is represented in the drama as a man of action, who was chary with his words, and who did not understand the art 'to conduct from far a discourse to his object, slowly and shrewdly.'

l. 169, &c. Arkas implores Iphigenia not to render the *king's task* more difficult, by a reserved refusal, when he

makes her his offer, but to meet him half way.—P. V. ii. has: durch Rückhalt, Weigern, &c.

l. 174. Iphigenia calls the wooing of the king 'the most painful threat,' because her union with him would debar her for ever from her return home.

l. 176. Lösen, here = befreien.

l. 177. This question is a continuation of line 175.

l. 182. Daß du, &c. i. e. that she studiously conceals from him her descent and origin.

ll. 183–87. These lines fully characterize the king's taciturnity which is so great, that he is silent even about Iphigenia; and that Arkas learnt by some casual words only, that a firm resolve has taken hold of his soul 'to call her his own.'

l. 187. Goethe has rendered the appeal of Arkas much more impressive by prefixing the word Laß, which is wanting in the Prose Version.

l. 193. Dem Verehrung &c. 'whose passion is restrained by his reverence for the gods,' &c.—Cp. note to l. 18.

Bändigen, lit. 'to tame,' is often figuratively used in German poetry (cp. ll. 988, 2096) in the sense of beherrschen, bezähmen. Compare the similar use of the French *dompter* and the Greek *δαμάζειν*.

l. 195, &c. Sinnt — ziehen &c. Miss Swanwick translates:

'Will he force employ
To tear me from this consecrated fane?'

l. 198. Iphigenia calls Diana the 'resolute goddess,' as being always ready for quick action, in her capacity of huntress. As a goddess she is sure to give her aid to the priestess, and as a maiden-divinity she will readily grant it to a maiden.

It is not improbable that l. 100 has suggested to Sir Walter Scott the refrain of his 'Hymn to the Virgin' (The Lady of the Lake, iii. 29), viz.

'Maiden hear a maiden's prayer.'

l. 201. Ein gewaltsam neues Blut, &c. Two interpretations are given to this line. Düntzer considers it to denote: 'blood that has been powerfully (gewaltsam, adv.) changed or renewed by passion'; whilst Weber and Strehlke explain it to mean simply 'passionate (gewaltsam, for gewaltsames, adj.) youthful blood.' The latter interpretation seems the more plausible and is, besides, supported by the Prose Version which ran: Solch rasche Jünglingsthat herrscht nicht in Thoas Blut.

The author of the Greek translation of Goethe's drama seems also to have adopted the latter explanation, viz.

οὐ γὰρ ἐξορμᾷ μένος
βίαιον αὐτὸν οὐδὲ μὴν ἥβης ὕβρις—

l. 204, &c. The 'harsh resolve of another kind' alludes, of course, to the intention of Thoas to introduce again the human sacrifices.

l. 213. Ein edler Mann, &c. This saying has become a familiar quotation in German.

Dritter Auftritt.

l. 223. The expression frommer Wunsch is here to be taken in the strict literal sense of 'pious,' i. e. pure and godly. It would seem, that Iphigenia wishes to the king—with reference to his intention respecting herself—the 'fulfilment' of righteous desires only.

Fülle for Erfüllung may be used in poetry only.

l. 229. The antithesis is well brought out by W. Taylor's rendering of ein Geringer (lit. 'one lowly born') by *subject.*

l. 229, &c. Cp. Eur. Or. 602.

γάμοι δ' ὅσοις μὲν εὖ καθεστᾶσιν βροτῶν,
μακάριος αἰών, &c.

l. 234. The verb besitzen expresses here emphatically that the spirit of vengeance had entirely taken possession of the king's mind.

l. 237. Gerochen for gerächt is now used in poetry only.

l. 241, &c. Still gedämpft, 'quietly subdued.'—was künftig, &c. 'what the future has in store.'

l. 246. The king seems to avow frankly, that his present motive for visiting the temple is not, as on former occasions, to offer prayers or thanks for victory; and comes, in accordance with his resolute and straightforward character, at once to the object of his visit.

l. 255. Some editions have here Abkunft which was the original reading (cp. l. 177), and was subsequently altered by the author into Ankunft. The latter expression implies, that the king was anxious to unravel the mystery of Iphigenia's arrival in his country.

l. 259. The necessity of slaying all men who came to the shore of Tauris, must be sought in the circumstance, that the inhabitants were obliged to be on their guard against invaders, more especially against the Greeks. (Cp. l. 2102, &c.) Euripides distinctly says, that the cruel law referred to the Greeks only (Iph. Taur. l. 38, &c.).

l. 260, &c. The acknowledgment of Thoas, that hospitality was a 'pious, or divine right,' is consonant with the nobleness of his character as conceived by the poet. Cp. l. 282.

Ein wohl, &c. This is a poetical inversion for: ein von uns wohl empfangener, &c.

l. 262. The singular form Tag, for Leben, is used in poetry only.

l. 265, &c. P. V. ii. has: Wenn ich . . . je verbarg . . . Vielleicht, ach! wenn du wüßtest, wer ich bin, welch' eine Verwünschte du nährst und schützest, würdest du dich entsetzen vor der Götter Zorn, du würdest statt mir, &c.

Although herself innocent, Iphigenia is conscious of the 'curse' which rests on her race, and which has driven her from her kindred.

l. 275, &c. Iphigenia expresses here her firm hope, that a return to her kindred has been 'ordained' for her, and designates, therefore, her exile as a period of 'wandering' only.

l. 276. The expression Elend is here most appropriately used. It denoted originally a 'foreign land' only, being composed of the Gothic 'ali,' *other*, and 'land,' *land* (O. H. G. élilenti); later it was used to express 'banishment,' or 'the misery experienced by people living in foreign lands,' and subsequently it assumed the signification of 'misery' in general.

l. 278. fremder, here 'unsympathetic.'

l. 279, &c. Thoas asserts, that whatever the decrees of the gods respecting Iphigenia may be, and whatever fate they may have ordained for her kindred and herself, they had made her coming a blessing to *him*.

Rath, especially when used of divine powers, is often employed for Rathschluß, or Beschluß.—gedenken is here used in the sense of zugedenken.

l. 292. Thoas considers it as a 'hint' from Diana, that Iphigenia should be treated as a sacred personage, because the goddess herself had miraculously placed her in the Temple.

l. 294. Jemand von aller Forderung lossprechen, 'to renounce all claims upon anyone.'

l. 295. Miss Swanwick translates:

'But is thy homeward path for ever clos'd.'

l. 298. In case Iphigenia should for ever be separated from her kindred, she appertains to Thoas in virtue of the law of the land, by the law of gratitude, and by the fact, that the goddess had herself placed her in his power.

l. 307. This line forms one of the most popular quotations in German.

l. 309. The term hochbegnadigt is a much more dignified expression than its synonym hochbegünstigt, and would properly only be used, when speaking of one 'highly favoured by the gods.'

l. 312, &c. It is rather difficult to give an exact literal translation of this and the following line, the general sense of which is, 'in whose words of great experience, which link thought to thought.' The attribute erfahren is often strengthened by adverbs, as: hoch, viel, alt, &c. to denote 'a high degree of experience.'

l. 314. It has been attempted to explain 'geographically' how it came to pass, that Thoas was acquainted with the fate of Tantalus, but ignorant of that of his descendants. The reason, however, seems to be very simple. The tragic fate of Tantalus is connected with the 'history' of the Greek gods themselves, who were, in a manner, also worshipped by the inhabitants of Tauris.

See on Tantalus the *General Introduction.*

l. 316. Wandeln is here poetically used in the sense of verkehren, 'to associate.'

l. 319. Iphigenia does not admit the common story, that Tantalus had 'betrayed' the secrets of the gods, or that, wishing to test the latter, he was so 'ignoble' as to kill his own son, and set him before them as food. She therefore presents in its mildest form the wrong attributed to her ancestor, viz. that he had partaken in the society of the gods of nectar and ambrosia, and being proud of this distinction—which placed him at too great a height (l. 318)—he presumptuously boasted of it.

Somewhat in the same way Euripides makes Electra say (Or. l. 8, &c.):

ὡς μὲν λέγουσιν, ὅτι θεοῖς ἄνθρωπος ὢν
κοινῆς τραπέζης ἀξίωμ' ἔχων ἴσον,
ἀκόλαστον ἔσχε γλῶσσαν, &c.

l. 321. The designation Donnerer (by syncope Donnrer), with reference to Zeus, is Homeric. Cp. the Greek βρονταῖος, and the Latin *Jupiter tonans.*

l. 324. The gen. form Jovis, from *Jupiter*, is more euphonious than the gen. Zeusens from Zeus, used by some German poets and translators.

l. 325. Tartarus is appropriately called 'ancient,' because it is represented as the lowest part in creation, viz. 'as deep below Hades, as earth is below heaven,' and consequently assumed to have been created first of all things. It is also represented as the prison of Cronos, the Titans, &c.

The name of Tartarus occurs in the Iliad, but not in the passage of the Odyssey, where the punishment of Tantalus is described.

l. 328, &c. This passage is rather perplexing, as Tantalus

did not belong to the race of the 'Titans' proper. It may be inferred, however, from a passage in Goethe's Wahrheit und Dichtung that he considered as Titans not only those 'heaven-storming' beings, who actually revolted against the sway of the gods, but also those, who acknowledged the supremacy of the latter, and who, having once been admitted to their 'society and companionship,' would no longer submit to them as their inferiors[1].

The gen. der Titanen refers also, as is seen from P. V. ii, to die gewalt'ge Brust.

l. 330, &c. The phrase that 'a band of brass was forged round the forehead of the descendants of Tantalus,' is used by Goethe to express in general their perversity, which concealed from their unsettled (scheuen) looks, prudence, restraint, &c., and which turned every desire of theirs into a raging passion, that knew no bounds[2].

Der Gott is here used, as Θεὸς by Homer, in general for 'deity.'

l. 336. The expression Gewaltigwollende, is here used to denote the 'strong-willed' character of Pelops, on which see the *General Introduction*.

l. 339. This line has six feet. The name of Oenomaus must be pronounced as two iambics, viz. Œnŏmăŭs. The genitive is marked by an apostrophe, which usage is not uncommon in German with Latin and Greek names ending in *-us*.

l. 340. Pelops is represented as having had many more children, but here only those are mentioned who are prominent in the history of their race.

[1] The passage alluded to above, occurs in Book xv. of Goethe's Autobiography, and runs thus:

Der titanisch-gigantische, himmelstürmende Sinn jedoch, verlieh meiner Dichtungsart keinen Stoff. Eher ziemte sich mir, darzustellen jenes friedliche, plastische, allenfalls duldende Widerstreben, das die Obergewalt anerkannt, aber sich ihr gleichsetzen möchte. Doch auch die kühnern jenes Geschlechts, Tantalus, Ixion, Sisyphus, waren meine Heiligen. In die Gesellschaft der Götter aufgenommen, mochten sie sich nicht untergeordnet genug betragen, als übermüthige Gäste ihres wirthlichen Gönners Zorn verdient, und sich eine traurige Verbannung zugezogen haben.

[2] In describing in a letter to Schiller (1797) the external appearance of the gifted Siegfried Schmidt of Friedberg (1774-1825), Goethe quotes the passage from P. V.: Aber um die Stirne schmiedete ihm ein ehernes Band der Vater der Götter. S. Schmidt, who is said to have become insane towards the end of his life, was distinguished by a remarkable look, full of energy, obstinacy and a powerful will. Cp. Goethe-Schiller, Briefwechsel, iii. 190-93.

l. 341. Thyestes, the younger brother, is here placed first, probably on account of the metre; the German form being an iambic, whilst Atreus is a spondee. Cp. l. 360, *note*.

l. 342, &c. The favourite son of Pelops who 'sprang from another union' (Aus—wachsend) was called Chrysippus. His mother was Axioche, or the nymph Danais. The common story is that his step-mother Hippodomia induced Atreus and Thyestes to kill him. That Chrysippus was the eldest son of Pelops is not distinctly mentioned by ancient writers, but Goethe represented him here as such for the sake of dramatic expediency.

ll. 351–58. Goethe assumes here the theory, founded on the axiom of 'natura nihil facit per saltum,' that no prominent character, for good or evil, springs up suddenly in any family, but that there always is in the 'inheritance of genius' a gradual succession of either good or bad men, before the climax is reached in one, who is either the delight or the terror of the world. He, then, may be called happy, who with pleasure dwells on his lineage and 'inwardly rejoicing feels that he closes the glorious line,' i. e. that the climax of good is reached in him.

l. 360. In this line the name of *Atreus* is preceded by a short syllable. Cp. l. 341, *note*.

l. 362, &c. Miss Swanwick translates the clause Bald—Bette by:

> '*His brother's honour first Thyestes wounds.*'

l. 365. Schwere, here 'momentous,' in the sense of 'horrible.'

l. 366. This was Pleisthenes, who was borne to Atreus by his first wife Cleola.

l. 368. Cp. *note* to l. 18.

l. 369. Königsstadt, in poetry, 'a town where a king has his usual residence,' 'the royal city.'

l. 374. Trunken, lit. 'intoxicated,' here 'impassioned'; 'frenzied.'

l. 379. The two sons were called Pleisthenes and Tantalus.

l. 384. Seneca, who has dramatized the occurrence related in the present passage, makes the unfortunate father exclaim, after he had partaken of the banquet:

> 'Quis hic tumultus viscera exagitat mea?
> Quid tremuit intus? Sentio impatiens onus,
> Meumque gemitu non meo pectus gemit.'
> (Thyest. Act. v. 1000.)

l. 387. This line consists of four feet only, and it may be assumed that Goethe purposely made it shorter, in order to express the horrible deed as briefly as possible.

l. 390. That the sun changed his course in horror of the 'Thyestean Banquet' is related by several ancient poets. Cp. Eur. Iph. Taur. l. 192:

> δινευούσαις
> ἵπποις πταναῖς ἀλλάξας
> ἐξ ἕδρας ἱερὰν ἄρμ' αὐγὰν
> ἅλιος ἄλλᾳ προσέβαλεν

and El. l. 736:

> λέγεται . . . .
> . . . .
> στρέψαι θερμὰν ἀέλιον
> χρυσωπὸν ἕδραν ἀλλά-
> ξαντα δυστυχίᾳ βροτεί-
> ῳ θνατᾶς ἕνεκεν δίκας.[1]

In relating the above occurrence Hyginus (Fab. Lib. Cap. 88) says: 'Ob id scelus etiam sol currum avertit.'

ll. 393–96. These lines allude to other horrible occurrences which, as related by Hyginus (ibid.), took place in the family of the Tantalides. Those deeds of an 'unsettled mind,' however, appear to us only in a 'ghastly twilight,' for night covers them, as well as the great misery of the men, by her 'heavy wings.'

P. V. i. has: Die finstre Nacht hat noch viel schreckliches Geschick und Thaten dieser Unseligen gebrütet.

l. 397. P. V. i. has: Laß des Gräuels ein Ende sein, 'enough of these horrors.'

l. 398. Thoas cannot help attributing it to a miracle, that so noble-minded a person should be 'descended' from such a savage race. (Sage mir, wer du bist, P. V.)

l. 402. The express. erste Zeit is here used elliptically for erste Lebenszeit, i. e. since her 'childhood'; 'at all times.'

l. 410. Zwischen denotes here 'association'; 'companionship,' i. e. *with*. Orestes was the common favourite of his sisters, and grew up as it were, 'between,' or rather 'with them.'

The Greek translation has: ἀδελφαῖν μετὰ δυοῖν.

l. 416, &c. Trojens, poet. gen. for Trojas, as Europens for Europas.

The following remark is very appropriately put in the mouth of Iphigenia, to show the interest she, as a Greek, takes in the capture of Troy.

l. 421. The wrath of Diana against Agamemnon is attributed to various causes. See *General Introduction.*

[1] The above quotation is given according to the text adopted by Schöne, Köchly, &c.

l. 443. Hier refers to bewahrt, l. 441.

l. 445. Weg has here the meaning of 'design.'

l. 449. Ängstlich, 'uneasily'; 'with anxious care,' i.e. with anxiety to evade his offer.

l. 450. This happy saying, which forms a familiar quotation in German, expresses, that long speeches uttered to palliate a refusal are entirely thrown away; for the person refused only hears the *No!*

l. 455. The adv. entgegen would in common prose be placed before sehnen.

l. 458, &c. Lispeln, here in the sense of flüstern.

ll. 459–60. These lines have called forth the remark of Düntzer: Die Sitte der Ausschmückung des Hauses durch Kränze bei der Geburt ist nicht griechisch.—It is not impossible, however, that the clause 'joy should twine the most beautiful wreath from column to column,' is here meant figuratively only, and that the words wie um eine Neugeborne are intended to denote, 'as for one born anew,' i.e. for one restored again to life.

Similar inflectional elisions as in von Säul' instead of von Säulen, occur not unfrequently in Goethe's poetry.

l. 468. This censure, directed against women in general, is uttered by Thoas with special reference to the conduct of Helena. That Iphigenia feels the allusion is seen by line 476.

l. 473. So dringt auf sie, 'then . . . assails them'; 'urges them on.'

l. 474. The beautiful, poetical expression: Der Ueberredung goldne Zunge may be compared to the Greek usage of designating eloquent words by the attribute 'golden' (*χρύσεος*). The epithet *χρυσόστομος* 'of golden mouth,' Goldmund, was applied, among later Greeks, to great orators, as Dio Chrysostomus, &c.

In the Greek translation the above two lines are rendered by:

ὅμως γε καὶ τότ' εὐμενὴς αὐτῶν μάτην
μύθοισι πειθὼ χρυσέοις ἀνθάπτεται.

l. 476. Cp. l. 468, *note*.

l. 495. Thoas avers that the feelings of his own heart may be, just as well as those of Iphigenia, an echo of the voice of the gods.

l. 496. Iphigenia alludes to the 'storm of passion.'

l. 498. Kings being considered as the first among the people should set an example of reverence for the divine word.

l. 499. Thoas alludes to the inherited right of Iphigenia to sit at the table of Zeus, in consequence of her descent from *Tantalus* (cp. *l.* 310, &c.). He taunts her, therefore, with

the reproach, that she must consider herself superior to him who was merely an 'earth-born savage, or barbarian.'

l. 501, &c. Iphigenia now repeats her former complaint (cp. l. 476), that the king makes her smart for her confidence.

l. 503. The king has hitherto preserved his composure, and being now afraid to lose it, he exclaims, that after all he is but human, and it is, therefore, better, that their argument should end there.

l. 503. Sei has here the sense of verbleibe.

l. 509. Cp. l. 101, &c. and l. 122, &c. and *notes*.

l. 520, &c. Thoas states, that he will no longer restrain the wishes of the people, who demand the re-instatement of the human sacrifices.

l. 522. Um meinetwillen, &c., she never asked for her own sake, that the king should restrain the desire of people.

l. 524. Er dichtet ihnen nur . . . an, 'he only attributes to them.'

Cp. with the present passage, Eur. Iph. Taur. l. 386, &c.

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν
τὰ Ταντάλου θεοῖσιν ἑστιάματα
ἄπιστα κρίνω, παιδὸς ἡσθῆναι βορᾷ,
τοὺς δ' ἐνθάδ', αὐτοὺς ὄντας ἀνθρωποκτόνους,
ἐς τὸν θεὸν τὸ φαῦλον ἀναφέρειν δοκῶ·
οὐδένα γὰρ οἶμαι δαιμόνων εἶναι κακόν.

l. 528. The king calls the custom 'sacred,' because it was hallowed by an ancient law. Cp. das Gesetz gebietet's, &c. l. 258.

l. 529. Thoas calls reason 'easily moved,' because it is accessible to arguments.

l. 533, &c. The king suspects that the strangers bode no good to his realm, because he found them hidden on the shore.

Vierter Auftritt.

In the following soliloquy the dactylic measure prevails, intermingled with trochees.

l. 538. Du hast Wolken, &c. This passage refers to Iphigenia's miraculous escape at Aulis. See *General Introduction*.

l. 540, &c. It has been remarked, that this passage is contrary to the spirit of antiquity which assumed, that even the gods were powerless against fate. I think, however, that the word Geschick is here not synonymous with Schicksal, i.e. inexorable fate in general, but rather in the signification of 'a single occurrence befalling a man'; 'a single fortunate or un-

fortunate event.' The rendering of dem—Armen would, therefore, be 'out of the grasp of merciless misfortune.' This explanation seems the more plausible, as Iphigenia was not to be sacrificed by any decree of fate, but only by the command of Diana, who, being appeased by the 'appearance' of punishment (l. 442), saved her herself.

l. 544. Diana was, to a certain extent, the female counterpart of Apollo, and thus also a goddess of prophecy.

l. 546. Diana being the goddess of the moon, Iphigenia compares her glance which rests protectingly over her worshippers, to the light which rests and holds its sway over the earth.

l. 551, &c. These lines express the remorse which haunts anyone who has shed human blood; however much he may lament the deed, the form of the slain, murdered by chance, is sure to lie in wait for his evil hours and even unintentionally terrify him.

l. 554. Denn, &c. i. e. that remorse is so powerful, because the immortals love, &c.

The expression der—Geschlechter may be traced to Homeric usages. Cp. for weitverbreitet, *πολυσπερής*, Il. ii. 804; Od. xi. 365, and for der Menschen . . . Geschlechter, *γένος ἀνδρῶν*, Il. xii. 23.

ll. 557–60. The gods readily grant to man this fleeting life, and willingly allow him the delight to enjoy with them the cheerful aspect of their own eternal heavens.

Mark the antithesis between Unsterblichen (l. 554) and Sterblichen (l. 557).

P. V. ii. has: Denn sie [die Unsterblichen] haben ihr Menschengeschlecht lieb, sie wollen ihm sein kurzes Leben gerne fristen, und gönnen ihm auf eine Weile den Mitgenuß des ewigleuchtenden Himmels.

Euripides makes the Dioscuri say (El. l. 1329):

ἔνι γὰρ κἀμοὶ τοῖς τ' οὐρανίδαις
οἶκτοι θνητῶν πολυμόχθων.

Zweiter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Orestes and Pylades are the two strangers to whom the king alluded (l. 532, &c.), and it must be assumed, that they had been brought to the temple by his command.

l. 561, &c. Orestes feels the growing calmness of his soul to be a presentiment of death.

l. 563. Goethe has, here and further on, appended the German accusative termination of certain proper names, to the abbreviated form *Apoll.*

l. 564. By Rachegeister are here meant the 'Furies' or 'Erinyes' who began to pursue Orestes immediately after the murder of his mother. Cp. Aesch. Choëph. 383, &c. and Eur. Or. 400, &c. See also *Gen. Introd.*

l. 566. Diana was the twin-sister of Apollo.

l. 567. Hoffnungsreich is both a more expressive and more poetical term, than hoffnungsvoll.

l. 568. The attribute Gewiß is here synonymous with bestimmt, unzweifelhaft, &c. i.e. 'sure,' 'clear'; 'indubious.'—Götterworte = göttliche Worte.

l. 571. Düntzer and Strehlke refer the expression Götterhand, 'divine hand,' to Apollo, who urged on Orestes to matricide; whilst Weber seems inclined to interpret the term as referring to the 'gods' in general, who deprived him of all enjoyment of life. I fully agree with the latter interpretation, since the punishment was not directly inflicted on Orestes by Apollo himself, but by the avenging deities or furies, 'who compressed his heart and deadened his sense.'

The rendering of Götterhand by the Homeric expression *κραταιὰ Μοῖρα*, in the Greek translation, coincides with this view.

l. 573. To be deprived of the enjoyment of the light of the sun is frequently used by Greek poets for 'to die.' Cp. Eur. Iph. Aul. 1250, &c. and *ibid.* 1281, &c.

l. 574, &c. Atreus and his house were cursed by the gods after he had killed the sons of his brother Thyestes. Orestes thinks, therefore, that from Atreus dates the fatal doom of his descendants, 'never to obtain a glorious end in battle.'

Cp. Eur. El. l. 1175, &c.:

οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οἶκος ἀθλιώτερος
τῶν Ταντaλείων οὐδ' ἔφυ ποτ' ἐκγόνων.

l. 576. It has been observed, that Atreus alone having been

murdered—by Aegisthus—the term Ahnen must not be taken literally; but as Orestes wished only to express, that some of his ancestors had perished by a violent death, i. e. 'that they had succumbed like victims in a miserable death,' he may also have included Tantalus, who is represented as having been hurled down from Mount Sipylus by Zeus.

l. 579, &c. Goethe follows the usual version (not adopted by Homer. Cp. Il. xi. 389, &c.), according to which Agamemnon was killed by Clytemnestra in his bath, consequently in a secluded part of the house. Hence the expression Als — Winkel, 'than in a wretched nook,' or 'obscure recess.'

The clause wo — stellt, refers here, in general terms, to the snare laid for Agamemnon by Clytemnestra and his near relative Aegisthus.

l. 581. So lange, i. e. until he will die as a sacrifice on the altar.

The Furies, or Erinyes are described by Homer as dwelling in the gloomy space beneath the earth, called Erebus (Ἔρεβος), and by Aeschylus as inhabiting the deep darkness of Tartarus. The expression Unterirdische, i.e. 'those dwelling underneath the earth,' is, therefore, a very appropriate, euphemistic expression; for the Greeks dreaded to call the Erinyes by their real name. When Orestes after having killed his mother, declared (Eur. Or. l. 408, &c.), in allusion to the Furies, that he thought he saw 'three black maidens,' Menelaus answers: 'I know them, but I am not willing to mention their names' (*οἶδ' ἃς ἔλεξας, ὀνομάσαι δ' οὐ βούλομαι*), and Orestes rejoins, 'Indeed they are terrible; you rightly dread to name them' (*σεμναὶ γάρ· εὐπαίδευτα δ' ἀποτρέπει λέγειν*).

l. 582, &c. The parricidal blood never dries up; trickling down from the murderer, it shows the traces of his steps. He is relentlessly pursued by the Furies, who 'dog-like hunt him by the scent of his blood' (nach dem Blut . . . spürend hetzt).—The P. V. had: ihr Unterirdischen, die ihr nach dem Blute, das von meinen Tritten träuft, wie losgelassene Hunde spürend hetzt. The redundant pron. ihr (l. 582) is here required, because the rel. pron. die refers to the second person plural.

The description of the pursuit of the Furies is chiefly based on that given by Aeschylus. After Orestes had fled at the advice of Apollo to Athens, to seek protection in the temple of Pallas from the pursuit of the Furies, the latter appear and exclaim (Aesch. Eumen. 235, &c.):

εἶεν· τόδ' ἐστὶ τἀνδρὸς ἐκφανὲς τέκμαρ.
ἕπου δὲ μηνυτῆρος ἀφθέγκτου φραδαῖς.

τετραυματισμένον γὰρ ὡς κύων νεβρόν,
πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σταλαγμὸν ἐκμαστεύομεν.

'Lo! here are clearest traces of the man:
Follow thou up that dumb informer's[1] hints;
For as the hound pursues a wounded fawn,
So by red bloods' oozing gore track we.'
(Prof. E. H. Plumptre.)

Cp. also Aesch. Choëph. 103; 983, &c.

l. 586, &c. The Eumenides were represented, as stated above, as dwelling in darkness in the lower world. P. V. i. has: Die grüne Erde ist kein Tummelplatz für Larven des Erebus.

Soll—sein, should not be an arena for hideous 'spectres.' The word Larve, which denotes in German, as *larva* in Latin, 'a terrifying phantom,' is used in the plural for 'furies.'

The saying Der — sein, forms in German a familiar quotation.

l. 590. Cp. l. 112 and *note*.

l. 591, &c. Pylades is 'his guiltless partner,' because in assisting Orestes to carry out the command of Apollo, he was not guilty of any parricide, but helped to avenge his kinsman Agamemnon. Orestes himself was banished from Mycenae and Pylades voluntarily shared his 'banishment.'

The Greeks considered it a great misfortune to be obliged to leave their native country. Thus Euripides makes Orestes exclaim, 'that there is no greater cause for sighing than to leave the boundaries of one's fatherland.' (El. 1314):

καὶ τίνες ἄλλαι στοναχαὶ μείζους
ἢ γῆς πατρίας ὅρον ἐκλείπειν;

l. 598. Sinnen has here the signification of; 'to purpose,' 'to plan'; and in l. 601 that of 'to study;' 'to consider.'

It is probable, that the figure of speech, 'to wind a way up to light through the entangled paths,' has been borrowed from the legend of Theseus, who did 'wind up his way' from the labyrinth by means of the clue of thread, given to him by Ariadne.

l. 601. Denken is not unfrequently used, in higher diction, with the accusative case, without any preposition.

Horche, here 'list.'

l. 605, &c. Before the victim, human being or animal, was killed, it was 'consecrated' by cutting off from its forehead a bunch of hair, and then throwing it into the fire.

Euripides makes Iphigenia say—in mitigation of her cruel office—that she only 'consecrates the victims, and others

[1] This refers to the scent of blood, perceptible to the furies only.

carry out the horrible immolation in the sanctuary of the temple.' (Cp. Iph. Taur. l. 40, &c.):

κατάρχομαι μέν, σφάγια δ' ἄλλοισιν μέλει
ἄρρητ' ἔσωθεν τῶνδ' ἀνακτόρων θεᾶς.

l. 609. Unmuth is here synonymous with Mißmuth, 'despondency.' The pres. part. zweifelnd has in this place a causal signification, i.e. 'by your doubting' (the promise of Apollo).

ll. 610–12. Apoll, &c. Euripides puts the mention of the oracular promise of Apollo in the mouth of Orestes. (Cp. Iph. Taur. l. 79, &c.) See *Gen. Introd.*

l. 615, &c. Instead of being surrounded by that cheerfulness, which is the usual accessory of childhood, a gloomy veil was cast round the tender infant head of Orestes, through the ill-treatment of his mother Clytemnestra. Thus (so) he grew up, and becoming the image of his father, his mute look was a silent reproof to her and her paramour.

l. 620. The adv. of manner still is here placed before the subject for rhythmical reasons.

l. 621. It is not impossible, that Goethe wished to designate by the expression tiefe Halle, Electra's sojourn in the large apartments used by the Grecian women for working in wool, &c. These rooms formed part of the 'women's apartments' (γυναικωνῖτις), in which also the male children stayed as long as they required female attendance.

l. 622. Beklommen is here synonymous with mit schwerem Herzen.

l. 628. From the subsequent admonition of Pylades it would appear, that Orestes alludes here to the day, when he committed matricide; for he tells him, using a somewhat modern turn of speech, 'that he should let the "infernal spirits" —by which he means the "furies"—in their nightly converse speak of that hour.' (l. 629, &c.)

l. 631. Heldenlauf is a poetical expression for Laufbahn eines Helden, i.e. 'heroic career.'

l. 632, &c. The service of the gods consists in the beneficial work, carried out by good men, in this world.

l. 634, &c. Sie haben, &c. namely, at the time, when Agamemnon was killed. In using the term Orkus, instead of Hades, for the 'nether world,' Goethe gives here the preference—as he has generally done in this drama—to the Roman mythological appellations, as being more familiar to Germans.

l. 637. Seinen Saum, &c. i.e. den Saum seines Gewandes, 'the border of his robe.'

l. 639. The omission of the augment ge, as in the present instance, worden for geworden, is allowed in poetry only.

l. 640, &c. The friendship between Orestes and Pylades has become proverbial. Euripides makes the latter say to his friend 'What is life (to me) without thy companionship'?

τί δὲ ζῆν σῆς ἑταιρίας ἄτερ; (Or. l. 1072.)

l. 643, &c. These lines refer to the time when Orestes had found a refuge at the house of Strophius, the father of Pylades. See *Gen. Introd.*

l. 646. The expression Die—Blüthe, 'the half-nipped young blossom,' is here used to denote the neglected state of Orestes in his childhood.

ll. 648–53. The following lines characterize, by a most poetical simile, the individual dispositions of the two friends. Orestes, in his dejected mood, compares himself to a sombre flower, about which Pylades hovered like an airy, brilliant butterfly, with daily renewed vivacity. Pylades thus playfully transmitted his cheerfulness into his friend's soul, so that, forgetting his misfortune, he lived on, carried away by youth's fantastic dreams.

l. 655. Sag, &c., namely, Pylades should say, that his own woes began. P. V. i. has: Mit deiner Liebe zu mir begann dein Elend.

ll. 656–61. Orestes believes, that, carrying like a plague-stricken fugitive the germ of latent pain and of death within himself, he infects all those with whom he comes into contact, so that even blooming faces soon show the languid traits of a slow death.

Verrathen in l. 661 has here the sense of zeigen.

l. 665, &c. Sind die, &c., i.e. the pinions on which man soars to great deeds. Fittig is the poetical term for Flügel.

l. 667. Wissen is here used in the sense of sich erinnern.

l. 670. Brust is sometimes used, like Herz, for 'courage' (cp. l. 1894), and Faust for 'physical strength.'

The Prose Versions have the plural: unsern Ahnherrn, which was subsequently changed by the author into the more poetical form of the singular, viz. dem hohen Ahnherrn; either to denote the 'ancestors' collectively, or the poet wished to allude in particular to Atreus, who was the common ancestor of both Orestes and Pylades.

l. 671. So, &c., namely, they hoped to pursue in the same manner the track of the monster and the robber.

l. 677. Da fuhr, &c., i.e. one of them would then seize his sword.

l. 678, &c. Future heroic deeds numerously crowded before their mind's eye, as the countless stars appeared to them in succession during the evening dusk.

P. V. i. had: Und unsre künftge Thaten gingen, wie die Sterne unzählig über unsern Häuptern auf.

l. 681. Dringen, here in the sense of drängen, 'to be impelled.'

l. 684. Actions generally become magnified after the songs of the poets (Der Mund der Dichter) have rolled them on increasingly (vermehrend wälzt); i.e. have glorified and transmitted them to posterity.

l. 687. Schlürft, 'drinks in.'

ll. 690–96. In wishing to imitate the deeds of our ancestors, as they stand before us in their completeness and grandeur, we pursue an ideal, which always flies before us. We take no heed of the path which we tread, and scarcely perceive the traces which show the earthly career of our forefathers. Thus we always chase after their phantoms, which, being removed from us by the distance of time, crown the mountain-heights, resting godlike on golden clouds.

ll. 697–700. Pylades asserts that he does not esteem the man who only strives after the approbation of the world, who does everything from vanity[1]. Nevertheless, Orestes should be thankful to the gods, who had wrought such great deeds through him while yet a youth. We must assume, that Pylades refers to the fact, that Orestes had been chosen by Apollo to be the avenger of his father.

P. V. i. has: Ich halte nichts von dem, der von sich denkt, wie das Volk ihn etwa preisen dürfte, allein du darfst den Göttern reichlich danken, für das, was sie durch dich den Jüngling schon gethan.

l. 701. Frohe may here be rendered by 'happy,' and bescheren by 'grant.'

l. 704. Fallen, here 'to die' (on the field of battle).

l. 706. The contrasting expressions erste and letzte are placed in German side by side, in order to express 'a very high degree.' Here both may be rendered by 'the highest.'

Orestes speaks here in the spirit of the 'heroic age,' when similar achievements constituted the highest bliss of man.

l. 708. Doch has here the signification of 'after all,' 'for all that,' i.e. 'who after all was honoured by me.'—Cp. the Latin 'tamen,' and the Greek ὅμως, which latter expression is used in the present instance for doch in the Greek translation.

l. 711. Sie, &c., 'they have doomed the house of Tantalus to ruin.' Cp. *notes* to ll. 326, 574, &c.

l. 714. Väter is here employed in the sense of 'ancestors.'

[1] Lines 697 and 698 seem to have been generally misunderstood; probably on account of the rather unusual expression: denkt, in the *sense of* der nur darauf denkt, i. e. 'who only thinks' (how).

The import of the speech of Pylades does not agree with the doctrine adopted by the Greek tragedians.

l. 715, &c. Nimmt sich . . . hinweg, 'earns.'

l. 719. Cp. l. 563, &c., and *notes*. See *General Introduction*.

l. 721. Erwarten is here used in the sense of warten. Cp. l. 1553; and *note* to l. 492 in my edition of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* (Clarendon Press Series).

l. 722. Goethe represents the oracle at Delphi, as having used the ambiguous expression 'to take away the *sister* from Tauris;' which the two friends interpreted as referring to the image of Diana. Cp. ll. 1928, &c, 2107, &c., and *notes*.

l. 724. Pylades wishes to point out the contrast between the cruel and barbarian Taurians, and the more humane Greeks. Cp. l. 734, &c.

l. 729. Geruhig is sometimes used in higher diction for ruhig.

l. 731. The expression das schon Geschehne stands here for das Vergangene.

l. 733. Pylades presumes that the execution of the great work, with which they have been commissioned, may have been decided upon long ago in the counsels of the gods.

l. 738, &c. Und seltsam sind, &c. In consequence of their having been captured, the two friends have already, strangely enough, arrived by mere compulsion at the very gate of the temple.

l. 742, &c. Man's prudence is only then of some avail, if heedfully it listens to the will of heaven, i.e. if it is guided by the hints coming from the gods.

ll. 744–48. The oracles used to impose upon heroes, who were guilty of some great crime, dangerous, or 'momentous deeds,' for the achievement of which, they were subsequently honoured by the world. It may be, that the poet alluded here specially, as in some other passages further on, to Hercules. Cp. l. 632, &c.

ll. 751–55. Cp. l. 582, &c., and *note*.

l. 761. Ueberlegter, 'considerate;' 'mature.'

l. 762. The character of Pylades, as depicted by Goethe, bears in general some resemblance to that of Ulysses, or Odysseus, the valiant hero, who was 'inexhaustible in cunning.' (Cp. *Critical Introd.*) Euripides seems to have conceived the character of Pylades somewhat in the same light, when in describing the two friends he makes a Phrygian slave say:—

> ὁ δὲ παῖς Στροφίου, κακομήτας,
> οἷος Ὀδυσσεὺς, σιγᾷ δόλιος,
> πιστὸς δὲ φίλοις, θρασὺς εἰς ἀλκὰν,
> ξυνετὸς πολέμου, φόνιός τε δράκων. Or. l. 1403.

l. 763. Everyone must select some hero whom he takes as a model in his pursuit of immortal glory. The simile of 'toiling up to Olympus' has evidently been suggested by the heroic career of Hercules.

l. 771. The expression ausloden, 'to draw out' (cp. the Lat. 'elicere'), is very characteristic of the cunning of Pylades.

l. 776, &c. It must be assumed that this much was known of the fate of Iphigenia, that she had escaped from some great calamity. Popular rumour placed then her origin in the land of the Amazons, who are said to have settled near the Thermodon, a river of Pontus Euxinus, consequently in comparative proximity to Tauris.

l. 779, &c. The wrath of the king against the two strangers, and his determination to have them sacrificed, must already have been known to the latter. Orestes believes, therefore, that the bright sway of the priestess must have vanished before the curse which covers him like expansive night; and that the pious thirst for blood will unchain the old custom, which, as Pylades had said, was restrained by the priestess.

l. 790. Unkenntlich, 'unrecognizable,' i.e. quite transformed.

l. 791. Stet auf Einem Sinn bleiben, 'to adhere steadily or firmly to the same opinion.'

Zweiter Auftritt.

Iphigenia unbinds the chains of Pylades, because the Greeks used to consider it as a favourable omen, when the intended victims allowed themselves to be led to the altar without any physical constraint. In the Greek play, Iphigenia bids the attendants of Orestes and Pylades 'to loose the hands of the strangers, for the consecrated must not be fettered.'

μέθετε τῶν ξένων χέρας,
ὡς ὄντες ἱροὶ μηκέτ' ὦσι δέσμιοι.

(Eur. Iph. Taur. l. 468, &c.)

l. 805. It is probable that in his first surprise at meeting a Greek in Iphigenia, Pylades actually thought of the land of his birth, in speaking of the 'azure mountains of his native port,' Phocis being a mountainous country, and bounded on the south by the Corinthian gulf.

l. 818. Welch unselig, &c., 'what adverse fate.'

l. 821. Lastender, here 'oppressive.'

ll. 824–43. The fictitious story here told by Pylades has several features in common with some of the fabulous tales related by his prototype Ulysses. (Cp. Od. 13. 256, &c., 19.

172, &c.) Like the latter, he transfers the invented occurrence to Crete, the 'land of seafaring adventurers and liars,' and as with the latter there is a basis, or at least a sprinkling of truth, in his account, such as the pursuit of Orestes by the furies, and the promise of Apollo that help would be granted to him in the temple of Diana.

l. 824. The apostrophe does not mark here the genitive case, but the elision of the vowel u, the name being Adrastus. All the names mentioned here occur in Grecian history, but there was no king called Adrastus at Crete.

l. 827. Zwischen uns, &c. 'between us grew up a rough and savage youth.' Trennen, here 'to disturb.'

l. 831. The expression des Vaters Kraft for 'our mighty father' is Homeric. Cp. βίῃ Ἡρακληείῃ, Il. 2. 658, 666; and the similar use of ἶς, *ibid.* 23. 720.

Cp. also the expression: Die rasche Kraft der leicht hinziehenden Pferde, in Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea. Fünfter Gesang, Zeile* 141.

l. 832. Beutereich = mit reicher Beute.—zurücke, for metrical reasons instead of zurück.

l. 844. The great interest which Iphigenia takes, as a Greek, in the destruction of Troy, is here emphatically shown by these few words, which imply that the stranger would be a 'beloved man' to her, if he assured her of the fall of the hated city.

l. 845. It is hardly possible to render with adequate force and brevity the terse assertion: es liegt, i.e. 'it lies in ruins.' On the whole it is best rendered by W. Taylor, who has, however, spun out the preceding line into two, viz.

Iphig. And is the fall of Troy accomplished?
Dearest of men, repeat, repeat that word.
Pyl. It is.

Euripides makes Iphigenia inquire of Orestes the fate of Troy, but the whole passage is without any dramatic force. (Cp. Iph. Taur. l. 517, &c.)

l. 849, &c. Pylades evidently wishes that Iphigenia should not speak to Orestes about his guilt, from fear that the latter would betray himself.

l. 862. It was usual with the Greeks to call the natives of other countries 'Barbarians,' which first meant only 'non-Greek,' and later on, also 'rude,' 'uncivilized.' The designation of 'Barbarians' was given to the Trojans by Euripides and other Greek dramatists.

l. 863. Pylades first mentions the name of Achilles, who was the bravest of all the Greeks. He was buried by his

countrymen, together with his faithful friend Patroclus, before Troy. (Cp. Od. 24. 36–94.) Goethe chose for the latter hero the epithet schön, 'beauteous,' as nearly all other attributes would, in German at least, here sound commonplace. Besides, in describing the apparition of Patroclus to Achilles, Homer speaks of his 'beautiful eyes' (Il. 23. 66), and Dares Phrygius says of him that he was 'beautiful in body,' *pulchro corpore.* (Cp. De Excid. Troj. Hist. cap. xiii.)

l. 864. Achilles was not only the bravest but also the handsomest of the Greeks. The designation Götterbilder, 'divine forms,' which can be traced to a similar usage in Greek, is therefore very appropriate with reference to the two heroes.

l. 865. Palamedes, the son of Nauplius and Clymene, was, according to some traditions, killed by Paris, and according to others, through the envy or revenge of his own countrymen. The tragic poets celebrate him, not only as a hero, but also as a poet and a sage.

Ajax, the son of Telamon, king of Salamis, was considered as the greatest hero among the Greeks, next to Achilles. He is said to have died by his own hands, in consequence of his being foiled in the contest with Ulysses about the arms of Achilles. (Od. 11. 541, &c.)

The word Sohn must be supplied after Ajax Telamon's, which expression is an imitation of his designation in Greek.

l. 866. The term Tag stands here for Licht, Sonne, i.e. das Licht des Vaterlandes; die heimische Sonne. Cp. the expression *νόστιμον ἦμαρ*, which has also been adopted by the translator into Greek.

l. 869. The expression liebes Herz may be used in German, as in Greek poetry, when persons address themselves in soliloquies. In English the epithet liebe must be replaced by the possessive pronoun 'my.' Cp. l. 923, *note.*

l. 870, &c. Odysseus, when tossed by a fearful storm on the sea exclaims, 'that thrice, four times happy are the Greeks who perished in the vast fields of Troy':

> *τρισμάκαρες Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις, οἳ τότ' ὄλοντο*
> *Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ.* Od. 5. 306, &c.

The same idea has been expressed by other poets.

l. 872. In speaking of 'wild terrors,' Pylades alludes to the fate of Ulysses, his companions, and some other Greek heroes. The 'sad end' refers, of course, to the death of Agamemnon.

l. 874. Feindlich aufgebrachter, 'in hostile anger.' For the term Gott cp. *note* to l. 330.

l. 878. The expression Mycenens Hallen, stands here for 'the

whole town of Mycenae.' Similarly Schiller says: Freude war in Trojas Hallen. Cp. *note* to l. 19.

That the citizens of Mycenae lamented the death of Agamemnon may be seen from the reproaches which the Chorus addresses to Clytemnestra in the 'Agamemnon' of Aeschylus.

l. 880. See *General Introduction.*

l. 883. Some editions have the less poetical reading: dieses Königs Haus.

l. 884, &c. Pylades perceives, by Iphigenia's agitated state, that she strives in vain to suppress the emotion of her heart at the unexpected, terrible tidings.

l. 886, &c. Nachbarlich is here used for als Nachbarin. P. V. ii. had: Vielleicht bist du die Tochter eines Gastfreunds oder Nachbars?

l. 888. Rechne mirs, &c., 'do not bear me any ill will.'

Cp. the saying of Sophocles (Ant. l. 277):

στέργει γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἄγγελον κακῶν ἐπῶν.

(For no one loves the messenger of evil tidings).

l. 889. P. V. ii. had: daß ich der Erste bin, der diese Gräuel meldet.

l. 891. In the account of the death of Agamemnon, Goethe follows chiefly the version of Aeschylus. Cp. *note* to l. 579 and *Gen. Introd.*

l. 892. The term ruhig is here used to express the feeling of security of Agamemnon.

l. 894, &c. The statement that the 'depraved woman threw upon his shoulders, &c. a garment complicate with folds and artfully entangling itself' is based on Clytemnestra's own confession, as given by Aeschylus (Agam. l. 1353, &c.):—

ἄπειρον ἀμφίβληστρον, ὥσπερ ἰχθύων,
περιστιχίζω, πλοῦτον εἵματος κακόν,

which lines Dean Milman has rendered by:—

'As round the fish the inextricable net
Closes, in his rich garment's fatal wealth
I wrapt him.'

Cp. also for Und künstlich, &c. Aesch. Choeph. l. 485: *αἰσχρῶς τε βουλευτοῖσιν ἐν καλύμμασιν*, i.e. Agamemnon was caught in a garment treacherously contrived for his ruin.

l. 897. Cp. for Netz, besides the above quotations, the statement which Euripides puts in the mouth of Electra, 'that her father perished in the treacherous meshes of a net.' (*ὀλόμενον δολίοις βρόχων ἕρκεσιν*, El. 154, &c.).

l. 898, &c. Goethe has here modified the version of Aeschylus, who describes Clytemnestra as carrying out the deed alone.

l. 899. Verhüllt, i.e. 'with a covered face.' Agamemnon did not die in the open field, like a hero, nor was he honoured

with suitable funeral rites. The latter fact was, according to the notions of the Greeks, considered a great dishonour, and Aeschylus has based on it a striking scene in his 'Choephoroe,' l. 421, &c.

l. 902. Aegisthus governed the country of Mycene in the absence of Agamemnon, and after the death of the latter he called his own both 'the queen and the kingdom.'

l. 903. Böse Lust, 'evil passion.'

l. 904. Und einer &c. = und ein altes, tiefes Gefühl der Rache.

ll. 906-17. Cp. *Gen. Introd.* In the present passage Goethe has adopted the mild interpretation which Aeschylus puts on the deed of Clytemnestra, in assuming that she was only actuated by a feeling of revenge. Cp. Agam. ll. 212; 217-38; 1389; 1407, &c. Euripides seems to have followed the same poet by putting in the mouth of the Peasant the words 'for as regards her husband's death, she had a pretence:'

ἐς μὲν γὰρ ἄνδρα σκῆψιν εἶχ' ὀλωλότα, El. 29.

Sophocles, however, does not acknowledge any 'extenuating circumstances.' (Cp. El. 564, &c.).

l. 919. Cp. Eur. Iph. Taur. l. 660, &c.

τίς ἐστὶν ἡ νεᾶνις;

* * * * * * *

καὶ τὸν ἄθλιον
Ἀγαμέμνον' ὡς ᾤκτειρ', ἀνηρώτα τέ με
γυναῖκα παῖδάς τ'.

(Who is this maiden? . . . And how she pitied the unfortunate Agamemnon, and asked me about his wife and children.)

l. 923. Cp. *note* to l. 869. The following note by the Greek translator of the present drama may be of some interest to classical scholars: 'Nescio an consulto hic Goethius imitatus sit Euripidem, non ubique felicem Homeri (*τλῆθι, φίλη κραδίη*) sectatorem. Cf. Med. 1242, 1244. Iph. T. 344: quae lepide irrisit Arist. Ach. 450, 480, 483, 485, 488.'

Dritter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

l. 926, &c. Cp. l. 801 and the first *note* to Sc. 2 of Act II.

l. 928. Die Freiheit, &c., namely, the freedom which the sanctuary grants to those who are brought there as captives.

l. 929. It is a well-known fact, that persons lying prostrate with a severe illness frequently enjoy, when on the point of

death, a last bright look of life, which may be considered as 'death's herald.' Compare the lines:

> 'How oft when men are on the point of death
> Have they been merry! which their keepers call
> A lightening before death.' (*Romeo and Juliet*, v. 3.)

l. 931. Sagen is here used in the sense of 'to acknowledge.'

l. 933, &c. Goethe seems to have here adopted the version of Euripides, that the priestess merely 'consecrated' the victims by cutting off a lock from their hair. Cp. l. 605, and *note*.

l. 939. See *note* to l. 161.

l. 941, &c. The special Greek 'household gods' (θεοὶ πατρῷοι), as well as Hestia (the Roman Vesta), the goddess of domestic life, used to be placed on a sacred hearth; the latter in the hall, where all the members of the family, and even the meanest servants, assembled for the offerings before the meals.

Streifen, 'to touch in passing.'

ll. 945–48. The presence of the noble strangers recalled to Iphigenia the image of those heroes whom she learnt to honour in her parents' house; and it was also this reminiscence which, instinctively, comforted her 'inmost heart' with beautiful hope.

l. 956. Iphigenia alludes here, of course, to the fate of Agamemnon, which she calls 'mute,' because it was not granted to him to die in open battle, but he met his death in an 'obscure corner.'

l. 957. Goethe seems to disregard here—evidently for dramatic reasons—the usual version, which represents Iphigenia as having already reached womanhood when she was brought to Aulis. See *Gen. Introduction*.

l. 958. Iphigenia here simply describes the feeling of awe and admiration she entertained on looking at the assembled heroes, but she does not describe the look itself. It is certainly possible to remember whether we looked on a person with anger or affection, and the censure of M. Patin, with reference to this passsage: *Il y a là un démenti formel à ce que dit quelque part Cicéron que l'œil qui voit tout, ne se voit pas lui-même* (Études sur les Tragiques Grecs, ii. 138), is, in my opinion, quite groundless.

l. 960, &c. Olympus was considered by the early poets as the chief seat of the gods, among whom several demigods, such as Perseus, Hercules, Theseus, &c., were admitted; and it is to the latter that Iphigenia alludes, in speaking of the heroic forms of glorious bygone ages.

Ilion, or Ilium is another name for Troja.

l. 966. Feminine substantives were formerly also declined in the singular. Now the practice has been retained in a few expressions only, but Goethe has, both in prose and poetry, several times used the obsolete genitive singular of the word Frau.

Aegisthens is the genitive of the abbreviated form Aegisth.

l. 967. Orestes, hesitating from a natural feeling to acknowledge the dreadful deed with a direct affirmative, does so by the indirect, but still emphatic affirmation: du sagst's, 'it is as thou sayest.'

ll. 970–73. As ill weeds by shaking their dreary tops spread numerous seeds, thus the grandchildren of Tantalus (i.e. Atreus and Thyestes) have engendered to their children's children, murderers of their own kindred, for an endless reciprocation of frenzy.

P. V. ii. has: So haben Tantals Enkel den Fluch, gleich einem unvertilgbarn Unkraut, mit voller Hand gesät, und jedem ihrer Kinder wieder einen Mörder zur ewigen Wechselwuth erzeugt.'

Aeschylus makes Clytemnestra express a similar sentiment, viz. that an evil genius possesses the family of the Atridae, and incites them to 'mutual murder.' Cp. Agam. ll. 1451, 1551, &c.

l. 973, &c. Iphigenia says that she had been so horror-stricken by the words of Pylades that she could hear no more, and asks for further explanation from Orestes. Cp. the passage from the P. V. further on.

l. 977. Das holde Kind. Euripides represents Orestes as having been brought as a child to Aulis by Clytemnestra with Iphigenia, and the latter brings him on the stage as a 'silent petitioner' to her father not to sacrifice her (Iph. Aul. l. 1241, &c.); and in Iph. Taur. (l. 834, &c.) she says 'that she had left him at home in the arms of his nurse.'

Bestimmt des Vaters Rächer, &c. According to the notions of the ancients, it was a duty to avenge the murder of kindred. Orestes was, therefore, 'destined' to be the avenger of his father, and this fact mitigates his guilt. P. V. ii. has: O sag' mir an, was ich verwirrt von dieser Nachricht verhört, wenn mir's dein Bruder auch gesagt, wie ist des großen Stammes letzte Pflanze, den Mordgesinnten ein aufkeimender, gefährlicher Rächer, wie ist Orest dem Schreckenstag entgangen?

l. 980. The lake Avernus (Ital. Lago Averno) is situated about nine miles from Naples. On account of the noxious mephitic vapours arising from it, and the gloomy groves *covering its banks*, the Roman poets considered it as the

entrance to the 'nether-world' (Cp. Verg. Aen. vi. l. 237), and the name was also used to designate the latter. The expression the 'nets of Avernus' stands, therefore, here for the 'nets of death.'

l. 982. Goldne Sonne, &c. It is hardly necessary to call the special attention of the appreciative reader to the present passage which contains an exquisite poetical sentiment. The expression of joy uttered by Iphigenia in the drama of Euripides (Iph. Taur. l. 842, &c.), appears feeble and almost commonplace by the side of it.

l. 985. Gastfreundlich may here be rendered by the periphrasis 'by ties of hospitality.'

l. 988. Orestes implores Iphigenia 'to rein in and control her feelings.'

l. 989, &c. Cp. Eur. Iph. Taur. l. 1121–22.

τὸ δὲ μετ' εὐτυχίας κακοῦ-
σθαι θνατοῖς βαρὺς αἰών

(But misfortune after happy days must heavily press on us.)

l. 991. The verb wissen in the sense of 'to know of anything' may be used in poetry only, without the prep. von.

l. 996. Iphigenia considers her mother doomed, and as being past fear and hope. The P. V. had: Die sei den Göttern überlassen, Hoffnung und Furcht hilft dem Verbrecher nicht.

The repetition of the conj. weder instead of weder . . . noch is now not of frequent occurrence.

l. 997. The expletive auch has here, approximately, the meaning of 'and indeed.'—The expression Land der Hoffnung stands poetically for 'human life'; 'this world.'

l. 1001. Iphigenia's apprehensions are so manifold, that she feels as if uncertainty were flapping a thousand dark wings round her head, overwhelmed with anxiety.

l. 1004. Bote is here used in the sense of Herold.

l. 1005. Orestes was anxious to hide his deed from the knowledge of men, hence his assertion that he would fain bury it in 'night's silent and gloomy realm of the shades.' Höllenreich stands here for Unterwelt.

l. 1009. In the following account of the deed of Orestes, Goethe has adopted, with a few deviations, the version of Sophocles, as given in his *Electra*. See *General Introduction*.

l. 1010, &c. Anaxibia, the second wife of Strophius and mother of Pylades, was the sister of Agamemnon. Cp. *note* to l. 643, &c.

Schwäher denoted primarily 'father-in-law,' but was subse-

quently also used for 'brother-in-law.' It is derived from the same root as Schwager.

l. 1014. The expression den Angekommnen seems here to be used in order to denote that the friendship between the two youths sprang up as soon as Orestes had arrived.

l. 1017. Unversehen is here used for unerwartet,—fremd gekleidet = als Fremde gekleidet, i.e. 'in disguise.'

l. 1018. Als brächten sie, &c., i.e. they feigned that they had brought the sad tidings, &c.

l. 1023. With Aeschylus it is Pylades who, when Orestes hesitates to kill his mother, urges him 'to follow the behests of Apollo.' Cp. Choeph. l. 885, &c.

l. 1025. In sich, &c., say '(which) had been stifled.'

The following incident is a free invention of the poet.

ll. 1027–29. Although the floor had been often washed, still there might be observed, where it was stained, faint traces of the shamelessly shed blood in pale ominous streaks. This passage is based on the belief that human blood, wantonly shed, cannot be obliterated.

Electra says at the time of Orestes' return to avenge his father's death, 'and my father's black blood still putrefies in the house.' Eur. El. l. 318:

αἷμα δ' ἔτι πατρὸς κατὰ στέγας
μέλαν σέσηπεν.

Cp. also Choeph. l. 63, &c.

l. 1034. As Goethe passes over the existence of Chrysothemis the third daughter of Agamemnon (Cp. *note* to l. 49), the word Geschwister must here be taken to denote Electra and Orestes, since the latter was threatened, like the former, by dangers from their 'mother who had become estranged to them.'—The ill-treatment of Electra by her mother Clytemnestra has been described by the Greek tragic poets, who also mention that the latter felt no security as long as Orestes was alive.

Stiefgeworden has no exact equivalent in English, nor perhaps in any other language; here the expression Stiefgewordne Mutter denotes 'a mother who has been changed into a stepmother.'

Cp. the late Latin 'novercor.'

l. 1036. The mention of a 'fatal family dagger' (Schicksalsdolch) is a classical reminiscence. The poet seems to assume that Electra gave to Orestes the same dagger with which Atreus and Thyestes had slain their half-brother Chrysippus, and with which subsequently Atreus had killed his own son and those of his brother Thyestes. Voltaire, in his tragedy *'Oreste' also* speaks of a 'fatal family dagger.'

l. 1039, &c. The conception that the gods happily spend their bright lives (den reinen Tag . . . selig lebet) is Homeric. Cp. Od. vi. l. 42, &c.

The use of the word leben as a transitive verb is properly confined to higher diction only. The expression neu is here employed in the sense of 'fresh' or 'bright.' The P. V. had: auf . . . reinen Wolken.

l. 1044. An 'eternal fire' was properly kept up in the temple of Vesta only.

l. 1045. The purity and calmness of the life which Iphigenia led at the temple of Diana elevated her soul to the bright dwellings of the gods.

l. 1052, &c. In the following passage Orestes describes the torments of his soul caused by remorse and repentance—which are the furies that ceaselessly haunt him—after the ghost of his mother 'had risen from the reeking blood of the slain.'

The brevity of l. 1053 indicates the great emotion of the speaker. Similar metrical changes and deviations occur not unfrequently in this drama (Cp. l. 1055), and will easily be noticed and understood by the reader.

l. 1054. Aeschylus calls the furies the 'aged' daughters of night (Νυκτὸς * παλαιαὶ παῖδες. Eumen. l. 69). Cp. *note* to l. 581.

l. 1061, &c. Orestes was troubled by doubt whether he had acted rightly, and that apprehension, together with his actual remorse, are represented by the poet as the natural companions of the furies.

l. 1062, &c. Before the furies leave their nocturnal abodes in the 'nether-world' (Acheron) the vapours of hell rising carry with them in their circling clouds the ever-present consciousness of the past, bewildering the souls of the guilty; i. e. after a person has committed a crime, the consciousness of it haunts him unceasingly, and that consciousness is then followed by the tormenting furies.

l. 1066, &c. According to Homer the furies remained quiet in the nether-world until some crime was committed; then only they were permitted to appear on the 'beautiful soil of heaven-sown earth;' and exercising their privilege to punish or to destroy, they pursued the criminal.

The earth is called gottbesät, because it is God who has endowed it with fertility, and in so far the expression may be a mythological allusion to Demeter, the goddess of the earth.

* Prof. Paley and others have adopted the reading of γραῖαι.

The description of the furies and their pursuit of Orestes—both in the above passage and p. 55—is chiefly based on that given by Aeschylus. In the 'Choephoroe' (l. 1037) Orestes is represented as seeing, directly after the deed, gorgon-like women in black robes, and their hair entwined with serpents. He says that he distinctly sees his 'mother's vengeful hounds;' and the chorus endeavours to comfort him with the assurance that 'his soul is bewildered on account of the fresh blood on his hands.' In the 'Eumenides' Orestes is represented as resting on the central-stone of the temple of Apollo and the furies seated on chairs before him. Orestes leaves, and the ghost rising from the ground arouses the sleeping furies. Moaning and groaning the latter awake, and being urged on to resume their relentless pursuit, they do so with renewed vigour. Cp. also the grand choral hymn in the 'Eumenides,' l. 311, &c.

l. 1071. Cp. ll. 836–855.

l. 1078, &c. A stranger ingenious and practised in deceit, may weave 'a web of falsehood' as a snare for a stranger, but Orestes entertains such a sympathetic admiration for Iphigenia, and he is himself so unused to cunning and deceit, that he feels bound to reveal to her the truth.

l. 1083. W. Taylor renders this line by '*Is stooping to the tomb, is seeking death.*'

l. 1087. Du scheinst, &c. Orestes is led to this conclusion by the tenour of Iphigenia's first address to him. Cp. l. 941, &c.

l. 1089. Orestes wishes here simply to express, that he is ready to die the usual death of the victims in the land of the Taurians—which seems to have consisted in their being first slain in the temple and then hurled down a rock—and that his blood reeking down to the sea, may bring a curse upon the barbarians.

When Orestes asks Iphigenia (Eur. Iph. Taur. l. 625) 'What kind of grave shall be allotted to him, when he is dead'? (*τάφος δὲ ποῖος δέξεταί μ', ὅταν θάνω;*), the priestess replies: 'A sacred fire inside (the temple), and a rocky chasm' (*πῦρ ἱρὸν ἔνδον χάσμα τ' εὐρωπὸν πέτρας*).

l. 1094. Some commentators are of opinion that Goethe refers here to the goddess 'Fortuna'; which would, in so far be plausible, as that goddess is described by Pindar as the daughter of *Ζεὺς Σωτήρ*, i.e. Zeus the Deliverer, or Preserver. It may be, however, that the poet merely uses here a poetical figure of speech, in designating 'the fulfilment of our wishes,' as the fairest daughter of Zeus; and this interpretation seems to be the more correct, because he used in the P. V.

the figurative expression: reicht der Gnade, der schönsten Tochter Jovis.

l. 1096. Ungeheuer has here the meaning of 'gigantic,' 'vast.'

l. 1100, &c. As a king is known by the profusion of his bounty, for to him must appear trifling what to the mass of men would be a treasure, so one knows the heavenly powers by their long-reserved and wisely prepared gifts.

The expression Tausenden is here used in the sense of 'multitude;' 'common people.'

l. 1106. Whilst the vast-extending realm of the future lies open before the glance of the gods, mortal beings cannot penetrate into the 'to-morrow;' since every evening—or as the author poetically expresses it, the 'starry and misty veil of every evening'—closes before their eyes the prospect into the future. Cp. Goethe's saying: Was dir das Schicksal bringt, lehrt dich der Tag. The P. V. had: Jedes Abends gestirnte Hülle verbirgt sie (i. e. die Zukunft) uns; and it is this reading which helps us to interpret the rather unusual expression: Stern- und Nebelhülle.

l. 1112, &c. Man should wait patiently for the benefits of heaven, until they are ripe for him, and not, violently grasping at them, taste to his own ruin the immature fruit.

l. 1115. The P. V. had: Was es auch sei, laßt mir dieses Glück nicht wie das Gespenst eines geschiednen Geliebten, eitel vorübergehen. It seems, therefore, probable, that the def. article used in the poetical version has been employed by Goethe in the general signification of the indef. art., i. e. 'of a departed friend'; which usage is not uncommon in German poetry*. It may also be, that the present passage was suggested to Goethe by the exclamation of Iphigenia (Eur. Iph. Taur. l. 842, &c.), after she had recognised her brother; 'unhoped for joy fell to my share, my friends! but I fear, that he (Orestes) will soar out of my arms heavenwards':

> *ἄτοπον ἡδονὰν ἔλαβον, ὦ φίλαι·*
> *δέδοικα δ' ἐκ χερῶν με μὴ πρὸς αἰθέρα*
> *ἀμπτάμενος φύγῃ.*

l. 1124, &c. It is possible that the 'immortal veil,' which the goddess Leucothea gave to Odysseus (Od. v. 346, &c.) as a means of rescue in the storm, suggested these lines to Goethe; or he simply took the veil of the maiden priestess as an emblem of perfect innocence; so that the meaning would

* According to Düntzer the above passage contains an allusion to the phantom apparition of Patroclus, in the dream of Achilles, as related by Homer, Il. xxiii. l. 60, &c. Cp. *note* to l. 863.

be, that even if Iphigenia, the chaste and innocent priestess, would take Orestes under her special protection she could not save him from the furies, whom the poet designates here by the epithet of Immerwachen, 'the ever wakeful.'

l. 1127. The furies did not pursue Orestes into the temple itself. Cp. l. 727, &c.

l. 1129. Sophocles says of the Furies (El. 478, &c.):

ἥξει καὶ πολύπους καὶ πολύχειρ
ἁ δεινοῖς κρυπτομένα λόχοις
χαλκόπους Ἐρινύς.

'There shall come with many feet and many hands, the fury with *brazen* feet, who is lurking in the horrible den.'

l. 1131, &c. Aeschylus represents the furies as moaning, groaning, and *barking* in their repose like a hound, ever mindful of the chase (Eum. l. 126, &c.), but Goethe, who represents the Erinyes in a less ghastly, but more demoniac manner than the Greek tragedians, describes them as uttering a 'horrid laughter.' Cp. *note* to l. 1066.

l. 1142, &c. The mind-obscuring bewilderment which has taken possession of Orestes, is here figuratively designated by the expressions 'smoke and vapour'; and in this hazy shrouding he only perceives the pale light of the river of death, which leads him down to Tartarus.

The ancients assumed that a river flowed round the netherworld. Cp. Od. v. l. 513. The earlier writers knew it under the name of Styx, the later under the name of Acheron.

l. 1144. This line contains a poetical inversion. The P. V. had: Hast du nur Eine Schwester, die Elektra heißt?

l. 1146. Cp. Eur. Iph. Taur. l. 561, &c.

ΙΦ. *λείπει δ' ἐν οἴκοις ἄλλον Ἀγαμέμνων γόνον;*

ΟΡ. *λέλοιπεν Ἠλέκτραν γε παρθένον μίαν.*

ΙΦ. *τί δέ, σφαγείσης θυγατρὸς ἔστι τις λόγος;*

ΟΡ. *οὐδείς γε, πλὴν θανοῦσαν οὐχ ὁρᾶν φάος.*

(*Iph.* Has Agamemnon left another child at home? *Or.* He has left a maiden, Electra. *Iph.* What? Is there any report of his daughter, who was sacrificed? *Or.* Only this: that she died and does no more behold the sun.)

l. 1148. Iphigenia's questions about the house of Agamemnon arouse in Orestes anew the sting of remorse; and the Erinyes blow away the ashes of oblivion from his soul, and will not permit the last embers of the terrible fire which consumed the house of Tantalus—still burning in himself—to become quietly extinguished. Orestes apprehends, therefore, that the destructive flame, purposely fanned and *nourished by* hellish sulphur, is for ever to torture his soul.

The present instance seems to be the only one in which the verb verglimmen, 'to get gradually extinct,' is used in the reflective form.

The expression Höllenschwefel is probably a biblical reminiscence.

l. 1156. Rauchwerk is a rather more poetical form than Räucherwerk for 'incense.'

l. 1159. The verb vernehmen ('to listen to what another says') without an object is used in poetry only.

l. 1162, &c. Iphigenia asks Orestes whether all life has become stagnant in him; whether a petrifying charm, as if from the head of the terrible Gorgon, creeps through his limbs.

The reader will, of course, know, that the post-Homeric poets assumed three Gorgons; but Goethe alludes here specially to Medusa, whose head alone was so fearful, that a mere look at it turned people into stone.

l. 1164, &c. Aeschylus represents the ghost of Clytemnestra as inciting the furies to pursue Orestes. Cp. *note* to l. 1066.

l. 1168. The words of Iphigenia harrow up the inmost depth of the heart of Orestes, and he actually believes that he hears the voice of the Eumenides; hence his exclamation: They call! They call!* Cp. l. 1131, &c.

l. 1172. Iphigenia interprets the great agitation of Orestes as a sign that he instinctively feels the presence of his sister.

l. 1176. When Crĕūsa, daughter of Creon, king of Corinth, was married to Jason, Medea, who had been forsaken by the latter, sent her a bridal garment, which burnt her to death when she put it on, and spread the flames to the palace.

Zündet sich . . . von mir fort, 'spreads,' or 'proceeds from me.'

l. 1178. Orestes considering himself as an 'unworthy wretch' wishes to die 'an ignominious death' *alone*—'locked up in himself'—like Hercules who retired to die in solitude on mount Oeta, when he found that he could not escape the excruciating agony caused by the 'Nessus garment' which his wife Deianira had sent him.

l. 1184. The sudden change of the feelings of joy and sorrow is here compared to a 'revolving wheel.' The cause of the sudden revulsion of feelings in Iphigenia's heart, is

* The exclamation Es ruft is referred by some to Mutterblut. This interpretation seems to me, however, less plausible than the one given above. The expression es ruft; es hat gerufen, is frequently used in German, in a general way, for 'there is, or there was the sound of a cry'; or 'they cry,' &c. Cp. the Latin 'clamatum est.'

explained by her in the following lines: she shrinks back in awe from one who is a stranger, and still the voice of her heart calls her to her brother.

l. 1188. Lyäens is the German gen. form of Lyaeus (Gr. Λυαῖος, i.e. 'deliverer from care'), the epithet of Bacchus or Dionysus. The 'Bacchants' distinguished themselves in their worship of Dionysus by a boisterous frenzy, or an 'unrestrained sacred fury.'

l. 1190. Iphigenia asks Orestes to look at her and to judge from her aspect how her heart opens to the joy of kissing the head of him, than whom the world can contain nothing dearer for her.

l. 1197, &c. Die ew'ge Quelle, &c. i. e. the fountain Castalia, which flowed down mount Parnassus between the two cliffs, called Nauplia and Hyamplia, and which was sacred to Apollo and the Muses.

The epithet golden is in poetical diction used for 'beautiful,' 'splendid.'

ll. 1199–1200. Not brighter is the Castalian spring flowing from mount Parnassus, than is the joy which, gushing from the heart of Iphigenia, flows and surrounds her with a sea of bliss.

The construction of these lines offers some difficulty. In the first instance the conj. wie, which is usually employed in order to express the equality of two compared activities, must here be taken in the sense of als, which after a comparative denotes the inequality of two compared actions. It is also not quite clear whether the line Und wie ein, &c., refers to the preceding comparative, or to Freude.

l. 1211. Pylades had been wandering about in order to discover the ways and means of carrying out his designs, and Orestes now implores Iphigenia 'to advise him' (Weis' ihn zurecht), how to escape.

l. 1215. The apostrophe O nehmt, &c. is, of course, addressed to the gods. In the second poetical version, the line stands thus:

> O nehmt [ihr Götter, nehmt]
> Den Wahn ihm von dem starren Auge.

l. 1219, &c. Und rettete, &c., i. e. 'and bringing me hither saved me'; 'and brought me hither in safety.'

l. 1222. The senses of Orestes having been quite bewildered, Iphigenia recalls to him in a few words the actual state of things.

l. 1226, &c. Orestes expresses the wish that Electra too might at once perish with them, so that she might not reserve *her life for* a heavier doom and greater sufferings.

l. 1229, &c. In asserting that 'fratricide was an old custom of their ancient house,' Orestes alludes to the murder of Chrysippus by his half-brothers Atreus and Thyestes, to the attempt of the latter to kill his brother Atreus through the agency of Pleisthenes, and to the mortal enmity between those two brothers.

l. 1233. The poet expresses here symbolically the love of life by the love of the sight of the sun and the stars.

When Iphigenia utters her lament (Cp. Eur. Iph. Aul. l. 1281) at her impending death, she exclaims:

κοὐκέτι μοι φῶς,
οὐδ' ἀελίου τόδε φέγγος

(This light and the beams of the sun are no more mine). Cp. also above, *note* to l. 573.

l. 1235, &c. As dragons engendered in a sulphurous pool fighting with their own kin devour each other, so the grim race of Tantalus perishes in mutual destruction.

The rather high-flown simile of 'hell-born dragons who destroy each other,' is quite in accordance with the agitated state of the speaker.

l. 1240. Mit solchen Blicken, &c., i. e. with such pitiable looks of impassioned appeal. Compare the pathetic scene in the 'Choephoroe,' where Clytemnestra appeals to her son not to murder her.

l. 1245, &c. In the 'Eumenides' of Aeschylus the 'indignant shade' of Clytemnestra is represented as summoning the furies not to relent in their pursuit of Orestes. Cp. *note* to l. 1066.

l. 1252. The expression Stahl is figuratively used in German as 'steel' in English, for any 'sharp weapon.'

The verb verschonen, without an objective case, is of rare occurrence.

l. 1254. Düntzer very properly remarks, that as in the 'Oedipus Coloneus' of Sophocles, the much-tried aged sufferer must once more feel his horrible guilt in its whole extent, before he gains peace and atonement, so Goethe represents Orestes as sunk in the lowest depth of despair, before he can be freed from the furies and the torments of his remorse.

l. 1258. Orestes recovering from his paroxysm, feels himself at once calmed and appeased; and believing that he has drunk from the 'stream of Lethe,' or forgetfulness, he asks 'for another draught of cool refreshment,' so that the last 'agony of life' may be washed away from his heart.

Krampf, lit. 'spasm,' is in German also used figuratively for the 'paralyzing of the mind.'

l. 1262. Der Quelle, &c., 'plunged into the source of forgetfulness:' the latter expression refers, of course, to the river Lethe.

l. 1264, &c. Orestes, in half-awakened consciousness, believes himself to be in the nether-world, and implores the 'shades' (l. 1263) to allow him, after being so much tossed about, to enjoy the comfort of rest amidst their own repose.

The adv. gefällig does not refer to Schatten, but to Orestes himself, and is here used in the sense of behaglich. P.V. iii had: In eurer Stille labt gefällige Ruhe den umgetriebenen Sohn der Erde.

l. 1266. Gelispel is used in poetical diction for Flüstern, 'whispering.'

l. 1267. Orestes alludes to the rustling noise caused in the gloomy twilight of the grove, by the moving tops of the trees. Cp. l. 1, &c., and *note.*

l. 1269, &c., Die herrlich mit einander sich freut, 'who rejoice in glorious communion.'

l. 1271. The following lines express the perfect harmony which reigns among his kindred dwelling in the realm of shades. Their forms appear godlike, and in their traits they resemble each other.

l. 1274, &c. Cp. ll. 336–388, and *notes.*

l. 1281, &c. The following apostrophe to his ancestors, which Orestes utters in an exalted state of mind, is given by the poet in the more animated measure of the iambic Dimeter, or Quaternarius, with frequent employment of amphibrachic instead of iambic feet, viz.

⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑   ⏑ – ⏑ –
⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑   ⏑ – ⏑ –
⏑ – ⏑ –   ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑
⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑   ⏑ – ⏑ –
⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑   ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑

l. 1289. Den ich nur Einmal, &c., viz. when Agamemnon returned from Troy; since Orestes could have no recollection of the time when his father proceeded on the Trojan expedition.

l. 1296, &c. The greeting (Gruß) of welcome was upon earth the 'sure pass-word of murder' in the race of ancient Tantalus, and their joys begin only beyond the grave.

The second—*poetical*—version had:

Auf Erden war in unsrem Haus
Der Willkomm—Tod.

and P. V. ii ran: Heißt ihn willkommen! Auf Erden war's in unserm Haus ein Gruß zum Tod!

l. 1301. The 'aged sire' is, of course, Tantalus, whom Orestes hoped to see among the departed shades of his kindred, who had atoned for all the wrongs committed by them, and who, reconciled with each other, enjoyed undisturbed tranquillity. Cp. for the fate of Tantalus, ll. 310–325, and *notes*, and *Gen. Int.*

l. 1307, &c. Since Tantalus does not appear to Orestes in his vision, among the host of his departed kindred, he concludes that the all-powerful gods have 'with brazen fetters firmly rivetted cruel tortures to his heroic breast,' i.e. that he is doomed to eternal punishment.

Dritter Auftritt.

ll. 1310–1316. The vision of Orestes still continues; and his address to Iphigenia and Pylades is in the same metre as the latter portion of his soliloquy.

l. 1312. Die Eine, i.e. the only one of the race of Tantalus who was still missing in the nether-world.

l. 1313. All sudden deaths were believed to be brought about by the arrows of Apollo, or Artemis. The former generally slew men and the latter women. When Odysseus saw the shade of his mother—who had died in his absence—in Hades, he asked her, Was it a slow disease, or did Artemis the archer slay thee with the visitation of her gentle shaft?

ἢ δολιχὴ νοῦσος; ἢ Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα
οἷς ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσιν ἐποιχομένη κατέπεφνεν;
(Od. xi. ll. 172–73).

l. 1314. The expression armer Freund does not stand here in apposition to Dich, but is used as an exclamation.

l. 1315. The Prose Versions, and the first poetical version, had: Kommt mit, kommt mit zu Plutos Thron, es ziemt den Gästen den Wirth mit Gruß zu ehren. In the last version Goethe has changed kommt into komm', probably in order to avoid the frequent recurrence of the hard letter t in the same line; thus sacrificing grammar to euphony.

l. 1317. Goethe has here and elsewhere adopted the version of later writers, who considered Apollo as god of the sun, and Diana as goddess of the moon. Cp. l. 547, &c., and *notes*.

l. 1323. In accordance with a highly poetical notion, the paleness of the moon is here represented as expressive of her constant longing for the eternal light of the sun.

l. 1325. The P.V. had: O laß meinen einigen, spätgefundenen (i. e. Bruder), nicht, &c.

Far less poetical is the invocation of Iphigenia to Diana in Euripides (Iph. Taur. l. 1398, &c.):

ὦ Λητοῦς κόρη,
σῶσόν με, τὴν σὴν ἱερίαν, πρὸς Ἑλλάδα
ἐκ βαρβάρου γῆς, καὶ κλοπαῖς σύγγνωθ' ἐμαῖς.
φιλεῖς δὲ καὶ σὺ σὸν κασίγνητον, θεά·
φιλεῖν δὲ κἀμὲ τοὺς ὁμαίμονας δόκει.

(O daughter of Latona, bring me, thy priestess, safe into Greece from a barbarian land, and pardon my deceit. As thou lovest thy brother Phoebus, so believe that I too love those born of the same parents with myself.)

l. 1327. Und ist dein Wille, &c., i. e. if the will of Diana in concealing Iphigenia at Tauris has now been fulfilled. The conj. da is here used in the sense of als, 'at the time when.' The P. V. had daß.

l. 1331, &c. It must be assumed that Iphigenia had, in the meantime, been informed by Pylades of his intended designs of rescue.

l. 1333. Pylades repeats here more distinctly what Iphigenia had before—l. 1319, &c.—stated in a general way.

l. 1336. The shades of the departed were represented as mere airy forms, which were not tangible. When Odysseus wished to embrace the spirit of his dead mother in Hades, she flitted from his hands, 'as a shadow or even as a dream' (Od. xi. l. 206, &c.).

l. 1339, &c. The Parcae, or Fates (Gr. *Μοῖραι*), were described as spinning out, at the birth of man, the thread of his future life. The present passage must, therefore, be simply taken as expressing metaphorically that a favourable fate was now spinning the threads of their lives, and that their safe return depended upon those slender threads.

l. 1341. The P. V. had after the words zum erstenmal, the expression: seit meinen Kinderjahren.

ll. 1343–57. Orestes, who considers the troubles he has overcome as a violent tempest, compares the returning peace of his mind to the calm and the revival of nature, which follows the purifying violence of a thunderstorm.

In construing the present passage, the reader should remember that the words from die mit (l. 1343) to trennt (l. 1354), form a parenthetical clause.

l. 1343, &c. The god who sent storm and thunder was with the ancients principally Zeus; but Goethe describes here the *gods, in general,* as producing lightning, thunder and tempests,

or, as he poetically expresses it, as moving to burn up heavy clouds with flaming might.

The P. V. had: Ihr Götter die ihr, &c. Cp. *note* to l. 582.

l. 1345. The expression gnädig-ernst indicates here, that the gods *graciously* grant the blessing of the long-sought rain, but do so *sternly* amidst the roaring of thunder and the rush of winds.

l. 1348, &c. Doch bald, &c., i. e. the gods soon transform what man looked at with dread anticipation into a blessing, and thus change the timid, wondering anxiety into a look of joy, &c.

l. 1351. frischerquickter, 'newly refreshed.'

l. 1352. The epithet neu indicates, in this place, the reappearance of the sun in his brightness, after having been hidden by clouds.

l. 1353, &c. The grey veil of the last remnants of the clouds is gently divided by the pleasing and varied colours of the rainbow.

l. 1359. Orestes had hitherto called the furies by names characteristic of their dreadful functions, as: Unterirdische (l. 580); die Immerwachen (l. 1126); and also Erinyen (l. 1149); but now, being healed, he applies to them the euphemistic name, Eumeniden (Gr. Εὐμενίδες), i.e. the 'gracious goddesses.'

l. 1360, &c. The 'brazen gates of Tartarus' are mentioned by Homer. Their remoteness is here indicated by the expression fernabdonnernd, i. e. 'with a remote thundering clang.'

Grimm seems to be of opinion that it would grammatically be more correct to divide the compound, viz. fernab donnernd.

l. 1362. Orestes continues his simile by comparing the world, as it now lay before him, to 'the earth which exhales a quickening odour' after a storm.

l. 1363, &c. This line contains a poetical inversion. The P. V. had: und ladet mich ein auf ihren Flächen, &c.

The expression Flächen is here used, according to Düntzer, to denote the extended sphere of activity now open to Orestes.

l. 1366, &c. Pylades thinks that it is not yet time for rejoicing; for it is only the wind which will swell their sails, that may waft their perfect joy to Olympus, i. e. the time for rejoicing will come when they are in security on the open sea.

Vierter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

The first thirteen lines of the following soliloquy are, in general, written in the so-called 'logaaedic' metre, which consists of dactyls, followed by trochees. Some consider the verses as anapaestic, as several lines can very easily be scanned in that metre. The verses will perhaps best be scanned in the following manner:—

– ⏑ ⏑   – ⏑ ⏑
– ⏑ ⏑   – ⏑ – ⏑
– ⏑ ⏑   – ⏑ ⏑ –
⏑ ⏑ –   ⏑ ⏑ –
⏑ ⏑ –   ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑
⏑ ⏑ –   ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑
&c., &c.

ll. 1369–81. The heavenly powers do not quite forsake mortal beings, and when they predestine for them manifold perplexities and deeply agitating, sudden transitions of the mind, they provide for them a calm friend as a help in the hour of need.

ll. 1378–79. These lines express the contrast between near and far in a classical spirit, by designating the former by the 'native town,' and the latter by the 'distant shore.'

ll. 1385–89. Iphigenia represents Pylades as the embodiment of physical courage and of wisdom. The former is expressed by the 'arm of a youth in battle,' and the latter is metaphorically designated by the 'luminous eye of age in counsel,' i.e. by the clear-sightedness of experienced old age. The following lines are added to justify the assigning of the highest wisdom to the youth Pylades; for, possessing the sacred inexhaustible treasure of calmness of mind, he was able to supply from its depth counsel and help to the restless wanderer.

l. 1390, &c. The fact that Pylades did not allow Iphigenia to give herself heedlessly over to the 'happiness which she could not realise,' is mentioned as a further proof of his thoughtful wisdom.

l. 1398. It is a matter of course that the 'artful words' were imparted to Iphigenia during the time which elapsed between the third and the fourth acts. Cp. l. 1368.

l. 1400. Note here the use of the subjunctive.

l. 1403. The verb hinterhalten, 'to dissemble,' is an *inseparable compound*.

l. 1404, &c. The interjection Weh is used in higher diction with the genitive, in order to express the object which occasions the exclamation of lament (cp. Sanders' *Wörterbuch*).—Here, the interjection Weh der Lüge, might perhaps best be rendered by *Woe to falsehood!*

l. 1406. A word spoken in truth relieves the heart, as it were, from a burden, which is not the case when a lie has been uttered.

l. 1407. Getrost machen, 'to comfort.'—ängsten is used in poetry for the more familiar ängstigen, 'to cause anguish.'

l. 1408, &c. The lie which has been secretly coined does not hurt the person against whom it is directed, but fills with anxiety the man who has uttered it; as an arrow which has been shot off, being diverted by a god, misses its aim, and rebounding, hits the archer. The tradition that the gods divert the arrows from the direction given to them by man is already found in Homer, and the superstitious belief that enchanted bullets dart back on the shooter is perhaps founded on that legend.

l. 1414. The consciousness of being about to utter a falsehood had gradually dawned upon the mind of Iphigenia, and as anxiety upon anxiety trembles through her heart, she even begins to fear for her brother, lest the furies should again seize him on the unhallowed ground, or lest he with Pylades and the crew might be discovered at the shore.

Zweiter Auftritt.

l. 1422. The expressions warten and harren are here most happily chosen. The former conveys rather the notion of 'expecting,' and the latter that of 'waiting patiently.'

l. 1426. Arkas considers the command of the king to such a degree paramount that he cannot conceive any obstacle to its fulfilment.

l. 1427. Dessen wir, &c., 'which we are unable to control.'

l. 1431, &c. Trägt die Schuld, &c., viz. he has upon him the guilt of having shed 'kindred blood.' In Euripides, Iphigenia says of Orestes and Pylades, in bringing forward the same pretext (Iph. Taur. l. 1171):

οἰκεῖον ἦλθον τὸν φόνον κεκτημένοι.

(The guilt of murder they had upon them when they came, is that of their own kindred.)

l. 1435. Uebel is here used in the sense of 'malady,' or rather

'frenzy.' In the P. V. Iphigenia says of Orestes that he was 'in des Wahnsinns abscheuliche Bande gefesselt.'

l. 1438. The expression mit frischer Welle is here used to denote that Iphigenia considered it necessary, in performing the mysterious rites, to bathe the image of the goddess with 'fresh running water,' and not with the 'lustral waters' kept in the temple.

When Thoas asks Iphigenia, in the drama of Euripides (Iph. Taur. l. 1188, &c.), 'What is to be done with the strangers?' the following dialogue occurs:

> **ΙΦ.** *ἁγνοῖς καθαρμοῖς πρῶτά νιν νίψαι θέλω.*
> **ΘΟ.** *πηγαῖσιν ὑδάτων ἢ θαλασσίᾳ δρόσῳ;*
> **ΙΦ.** *θάλασσα κλύζει πάντα τἀνθρώπων κακά.*
> **ΘΟ.** *οὐκοῦν πρὸς αὐτὸν ναὸν ἐκπίπτει κλύδων;*
> **ΙΦ.** *ἐρημίας δεῖ· καὶ γὰρ ἄλλα δράσομεν.*
> * * * * *
> **ΙΦ.** *ἁγνιστέον μοι καὶ τὸ τῆς θεοῦ βρέτας.*

(*Iph.* I wish first to cleanse them with holy purification. *Th.* With spring of water, or with the moisture of the sea? *Iph.* The sea washes off all the ills of men. *Th.* Does not the sea dash against the temple itself? *Iph.* Solitude is needful; for we shall do other things besides. . . . *Iph.* I must also purify the image of the goddess.)

l. 1444. Dies, &c., i. e. the sacred rite.

l. 1448. Erdringen is a somewhat more emphatic expression than erzwingen, 'to enforce.'

l. 1454. The suspicions of Arkas about the pretended mysterious rites seem already to have been aroused; hence his assertion, in general, that he would fain bring the king a message, 'which would solve the whole perplexity now surrounding them'—i. e. her consent to marry the king would be beneficial to the state, and would induce him to desist from his resolution to sacrifice the strangers.

l. 1456. Was ich vermochte, &c. Iphigenia evidently alludes here to the confidence which she had willingly bestowed upon the king.

l. 1457. This line ran in the P. V.: Noch wär' es Zeit, den Sinn zu ändern.

l. 1458. This line contains the general statement that it is not in the power of men to alter their feelings and inclinations, which have been put in their hearts by the gods.

l. 1461. Arkas, seeing the firm composure of Iphigenia, asks her whether she would risk all, i. e. her own fate and that of others. It may, therefore, be more correct to render es in *the following line by* 'everything,' than by 'my fate.'

l. 1463. The gods are wont to save man in a natural manner and by human means, and he should not wait for their direct and miraculous interference; to which remark Iphigenia evasively replies that everything depends upon their guidance.

l. 1468, &c. The mind of the soldiers has now long been disused from the cruel sacrifices, and many of them, having been thrown on foreign coasts, have themselves realised the fact that a friendly human face is to the homeless wanderer a godlike apparition.

ll. 1477–82. The import of this passage, which is one of the most difficult in the whole drama, is this: mercy, which descends from heaven in a human form, nowhere establishes its sway more quickly, than among a vigorous, youthful people which, abandoned to itself and its own vague forebodings, bears in savage gloom the heavy burdens of human life; i.e. when one imbued with the principles of humanity appears among a healthy and primitive people which toils on, whilst it leads a cheerless and uncivilized life, and which has no other guide for its actions than an undefined instinct, or foreboding of what is right, then the task of spreading humane feelings is easily accomplished.

The term Milde is very comprehensive, as it includes the notion of 'mercy,' 'charity,' and 'humanity.' Cp. for trüb und wild, *note* to l. 1530.

l. 1483. The mind of Iphigenia being already moved by her own remorse, she implores Arkas not to agitate it still more.

l. 1489. The pain felt by Iphigenia may be compared to a friend, because it indicates to her instinctively what course would be proper for her to pursue.

l. 1491. The pain which Iphigenia feels seizes powerfully her soul, but it cannot have the effect of destroying her repugnance.

l. 1495. The clause: Was sich nicht geziemt, 'which to do is not right,' is in the translation to be placed after erwerben will.

Dritter Auftritt.

l. 1503. The revulsion has been brought about in the breast of Iphigenia at an unseasonable hour, because it shakes her resolution of joining in the plan of escape.

ll. 1506–9. A stream of joy had 'overflowed' the soul of Iphigenia as completely and suddenly as the tide, swelling in with rapid waves, covers the rocks lying among the sands of the shore.

l. 1509, &c. Iphigenia had never considered it possible to see her brother again; hence in embracing him, she actually 'grasped the impossible.' All the preceding versions had: Das Unmögliche hielt ich mit Händen gefaßt[1].

l. 1511, &c. Sich . . . um mich zu legen, 'to surround me.'—This passage refers to Iphigenia's rescue at Aulis. Cp. *General Introduction.*

l. 1516, &c. Meinen Bruder, &c., i. e. her heart was entirely and forcibly engrossed by her brother. Iphigenia resumes here the thought expressed above in l. 1510.

l. 1519. Her soul was only bent on their safety.—vorwärts bringen, 'to strive onward.'

l. 1521. So lag, &c., i. e. she looked already back on Tauris with the same feeling of satisfaction with which the mariner turns his back on the cliffs of a desolate island.

l. 1525. Deceit in itself was hateful to her, and now it has become doubly detested, as she is to practise it on her benefactor.

l. 1526. Cp. *notes* to ll. 869, 923.

l. 1527. Iphigenia begins now to waver in her resolution, and to doubt whether what she intended to do was right.

ll. 1528–31. Iphigenia had hitherto led in her limited sphere of action a life of childlike simplicity; but now there arises for her a conflict between her wishes and her duties; she has no more a distinct conception of her own obligations and the exigencies of the world, and thus, leaving the secure ground of her solitude, she embarks on the sea of life, the waves of which toss her about, and her mind is filled with 'gloomy anxiety.'

The expression trüb und bang is here used to denote the 'vagueness and anxiety' of the feelings of Iphigenia, in the same way as trüb und wild (l. 1479) denotes the state of a primitive people, which leads an uncivilized life, without any definite object.

Vierter Auftritt.

l. 1536, &c. Pylades considers the fact that the furies did not approach Orestes on the 'unconsecrated' ground of the shore, as a sure sign that he has completely recovered.

l. 1541, &c. Umlodern may here be rendered by 'to shine,' and sein lockig Haupt by 'his head with curling hair.' The

[1] *The interpretation that the expression* das Unmögliche *refers to the rescue of Iphigenia,* seems to me rather far-fetched.

epithet lockig must here not be taken as an attribute of yonthful or effeminate beauty, but like the Greek *οὖλος*, applied to the hair of Odysseus, as 'bespeaking manly strength.'

l. 1542. The expression voll denotes here that his eyes had lost their former gloomy look, and were open and beaming.

l. 1549, &c. These lines form a fine counterpart to the well-known passage:

When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions.

l. 1553. The *Hendiadys* traurig und erwartend stands here for in trauriger Erwartung, as above trüb und wild (l. 1479) for in trüber Wildheit, and trüb und bang (l. 1530, &c.) for in trüber Bangigkeit. Cp. also *note* to l. 81.

l. 1554. The statement that the crew bestirred themselves rejoicingly at the sight of Orestes is a further confirmation of his recovery.

l. 1557. Es sehnet, &c., i. e. each hand longed to grasp the oar.

l. 1563. Euripides represents the image of Diana as of small size, so that Iphigenia could carry it in her arms; whilst Goethe found it necessary to represent the image as of such great weight that even Pylades could only remove it because his shoulders were 'well-practised' in carrying heavy loads. Only in this way the fact could be explained that Iphigenia had not yet the image with her when Pylades arrived.

l. 1569. The expression klug is here not used boastingly, it being employed in the sense of 'shrewd,' 'artful.'

l. 1571. Mann may here be rendered by 'friend.'

l. 1580, &c. Schläfe is not unfrequently used by Goethe for 'head.'

Warum hast du, &c. Pylades asks Iphigenia why she had not the wisdom to shroud herself wisely within the veil of her sacerdotal privilege.

l. 1584, &c. The phrase auf etwas denken, corresponds to the English 'to think on something.'

l. 1588, &c. Iphigenia must acknowledge within herself that Arkas had a full right to put forward his demand, and as he did so urgently and with reason, she could not behave towards him differently.

l. 1591. The idiomatic phrase es zieht sich gefährlich zusammen denotes 'dangers gather;' 'dangers assume a more threatening aspect.'

l. 1595. Er bringe, &c., i.e. whatever message he may bring.

l. 1601. By pretending that she keeps both the prisoners securely guarded within the temple, and not allowing Arkas to

see them, Iphigenia would compel him to repair again to the king, and thus she would gain for them 'breathing time.'

l. 1603. Dem raub, &c. With these words Pylades wishes to justify the theft of the 'holy image.'

l. 1604, &c. The auspicious omens consist in their having found their companions, in the blowing of a gentle wind to favour their departure, &c., and Orestes has been healed, even before he has fulfilled the condition for his recovery. Cp. ll. 610, &c., 722, &c.

l. 1609. This line offers considerable difficulty, and has given rise to various interpretations. The expression Felseninsel can only point to Delos—the central island of the Cyclades in the Grecian Archipelago—which was 'the most holy seat of the worship of Apollo;' but on the other hand, the image of Diana was, according to ll. 722–23, to be brought to Delphi, and the first version had here actually *Delphos* instead of Felseninsel. It cannot, of course, be assumed that Goethe mistook *Delphi* for an island; besides the expression hinüber shows (l. 1608) that he thought here of Delos.

l. 1610, &c. By the return of Orestes and Iphigenia to Mycenae, the town, which had been left without a ruler, would revive and the household gods would be re-established in their paternal abode.

l. 1615, &c. The mere presence of Iphigenia would bestow a blessing on the house of Tantalus, and remove the old curse weighing upon it.

l. 1619, &c. As flowers turn to the light of the sun, so her soul, struck by the ray of the words of the dear friend, turns to sweet comfort.

The repetition of the pron. sich (l. 1622), which is grammatically superfluous, makes here the assertion more emphatic.

l. 1625. The expression still versinkt is rendered by Miss Swanwick by 'in silence droops.'

l. 1628. Entwickelte is here simply the present conditional, i.e. 'would soon mature it.'

l. 1630. Die sehnlich, &c., 'who wait in anxious expectation.'

l. 1632. Felsenbusch is a 'thicket growing on, or between rocks.' That the temple at Tauris was surrounded by rocks, has been mentioned before. Cp. ll. 1089, 1220.

l. 1634. Trauerzug, 'air of sadness.'

l. 1635. The verb ziehen is to be supplied after Sonne.

l. 1638, &c. Fear makes dangers appear greater than they are; and may hence be said to have concluded an alliance with it for the deception of man. The P. V. had: Zage nicht! Nur *in der Furcht ist die Gefahr.*

l. 1645. Cp. for gebeut, *note* to l. 54.

l. 1646. Necessity would only excuse her intended proceeding, but it could not remove the wrong of ingratitude.

l. 1647. Vor Göttern, &c. i.e. necessity excuses her undoubtedly both before the gods and men.

l. 1649. Too rigid claims on ourselves betray hidden pride.

l. 1650. Ich untersuche nicht, &c., Iphigenia asserts that she does not reason about her duties, but only acts according to her feelings.

l. 1651. Some interpret this line as meaning 'that if Iphigenia is conscious of acting rightly (recht = predicat. adj.), then she cannot refuse herself self-respect;' whilst others explain it to denote, 'that if Iphigenia would rightly, or properly (recht=adv.) feel the good she would accomplish, then she must also respect herself.' The latter version seems to be the more correct one, because according to the preceding line the feelings of Iphigenia tell her that she would *not* act rightly in deceiving the king.

l. 1652. Ganz unbefleckt, &c., i.e. the heart can only then be quite at ease and self-contented, if it is quite pure, or unspotted; i.e. when it can reproach itself with nothing whatever.

l. 1653. Here again the opinions of the commentators vary; some consider wohl as denoting 'indeed,' and others take it in its original signification of 'well,' the collateral adverb of the adj. 'good.'

ll. 1657–59. The human race is so wonderfully constituted and its nature is complicated and involved in so manifold a manner, that no one can maintain himself pure and straightforward either in himself or in his relations to others.

The demonstrative pronoun is sometimes used in German to express a notion in general, as: dieses Leben, 'earthly, or human life;' and here: dies Geschlecht, for das menschliche Geschlecht.

l. 1660. Bestellt sein denotes here 'to be called upon.'

l. 1661, &c. The first and immediate duty of a man is to pursue the course of life pointed out to him, and to heed the path he is pursuing; i.e. to do one's duty in accordance with the requirements of practical life.

l. 1663, &c. Man can rarely judge and appreciate his past doings, and when he is in the act of performing them he scarcely ever knows how to appreciate them, he being then biassed by his inclination or passion.

l. 1668. Fragt sich's, 'can there be any question?'

l. 1674, &c. One can see that Iphigenia has not experience

of misfortune, for she does not know how painful a bereavement is, and she is not even ready to make the sacrifice of uttering a false word, in order to escape a great calamity.

l. 1680, &c. The notion that 'necessity' is paramount to everything else, and that her stern hint is supreme law even to the gods, is Homeric (cp. the Greek ἀνάγκη). She listens to no advice; and is, therefore, described by the poet as the 'uncounselled sister of eternal fate.'—Later writers described the Fates, or Parcae themselves, as daughters of 'necessity.'

l. 1688. Der Rettung schönes Siegel, i.e. the image of Diana, the possession of which would complete the safety of Orestes, Iphigenia and himself.

Fünfter Auftritt.

l. 1689. The expression die Meinigen includes also Pylades, and may therefore be rendered by 'my beloved,' or 'those dear to me.'

l. 1691. Cp. for the form bang und bänger, *note* to l. 21.

l. 1692, &c. In what the quiet hope consisted, which Iphigenia yearned to retain, is described by her further on (l. 1699, &c.).

l. 1695, &c. The demonstrative is here used for the possessive pronoun.

l. 1696. The verb abnehmen, used intransitively, denotes 'to diminish'; 'to decline.'—Endlich in l. 1698 is equivalent to am Ende.

l. 1701, &c. Iphigenia's hope to purify one day the 'deep-defiled house' of her ancestors serves also to explain her yearning—as expressed in the opening soliloquy of the present drama—for her return home.

l. 1706. The word Vaterwelt has been formed by Goethe in analogy to the expression Heimatwelt, 'native land,' with which it is synonymous.

l. 1707. Necessity, the 'uncounselled sister of fate' (l. 1684), is called deaf, because it does not listen to any appeal.

ll. 1712–17. The Titans, who are represented in Greek mythology as the 'ancient race of gods,' were vanquished by Zeus and his brothers and sisters. The former harboured consequently a deep hatred against the 'new race of gods' and would not acknowledge their authority. (Cp. *note* to l. 328.) Iphigenia, therefore, implores the gods, that there may not arise in her heart an aversion against them, that no Titanic hatred against their sway may infix its vulture talons in her breast, on account of her undeserved sufferings.

The seat of the 'new gods' was Mount Olympus, whence their name Olympians; which designation is here, in particular, happily chosen, Zeus having carried on the contest against the 'old gods' from that mountain.

l. 1716, &c. Man reflects by the purity and nobleness of his heart the image of the gods; and thus by preserving the purity of her soul, the gods would save their own image. Cp. my *Notes* to Goethe's poem: Das Göttliche in the Deutsche Lyrik, p. 377 (Golden Treasury Series).

l. 1720. The Parcae were represented as not having approved of the sway of the 'new gods'; they sympathized, therefore, with Tantalus, on whom the gods had inflicted such severe punishment; and horror-struck they sang their fearful song of pity, which Iphigenia naturally remembers at the moment when the 'Titanic spirit' had been aroused in her. Cp. on Tantalus' tragic fate, *note* to l. 328, and *Gen. Int.*

l. 1721. Vom goldnen Stuhle, &c., i. e. at the table of Jupiter.

l. 1726. The following celebrated song of the Parcae is written in the amphibrachic metre, but several lines occur without a final short syllable, viz.

⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑
⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ –
&c. &c.

The song gives in grand poetic outlines a description of the tragic fate of Tantalus. The first strophe describes the arbitrary and everlasting power of the gods. The second contains a warning to men favoured by them, and a characterization of the insecurity of that favour. The third describes the fatal issue which results, when a contest arises between the gods and their favourites, or 'guests.' The latter are hurled into a dark abyss, waiting in vain for a just judgment. In the meantime—as the fourth strophe describes—the gods enjoy perpetual happiness in 'everlasting feasts' (ewigen Festen). Gloriously they stride from mountain to mountain, and from the deep abyss ascends to them the breath of stifled Titans, like a light haze and the odorous fumes from offerings[1]. The fifth strophe characterizes the irreconcilable hatred of the supreme powers, who cast their curse on the descendants of the doomed man. They turn away their benign aspect from whole races, and avoid the sight of the descendants, in order not to

[1] The defeated Titans were thrown into a cavity below Tartarus, and the giants Enceladus and Typhon, who also had contested the rule of the gods, were buried by the latter under the volcano Etna.

behold in their features the once beloved and silently speaking traits of their ancestor.

ll. 1762–65. Construe: Es horcht der Verbannte, der Alte†, in nächtlichen Höhlen auf die Lieder; denkt an die Kinder und Enkel, &c.

The verbs horchen and denken are used in poetry only without any preposition.

The expression Und schüttelt das Haupt denotes the discontent and wrath of Tantalus at his doom.

Fünfter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

l. 1769. The 'perplexity' of Arkas consists in his doubt whither to direct his suspicion; whether it is the prisoners alone who clandestinely are planning flight, or whether the priestess aids them secretly.

l. 1774. Weihe may here be rendered by 'lustral ceremony,' or 'rite.'

l. 1780, &c. Thoas commands that whilst a strict search is to be made from the promontory to the grove, the sacred interior of the latter should not be entered by the soldiers with a view of making it the arena of a fight, but a watchful ambush should be set round the grove to prevent the escape of the prisoners.

Zweiter Auftritt.

l. 1787, &c. In spite of the nobleness of the king's character, the Scythian makes himself heard in these lines.

l. 1791. The 'wrath' is here called 'holy,' because it was inspired by a kind of religious feeling.

l. 1796. Lockt . . . herauf, 'calls forth.'

l. 1799. Iphigenia not wishing to link her fate to that of the king, has marked out her own course, i. e. she independently devises her own fate.

l. 1800. Cp. l. 511, &c.

l. 1801. Der is here the dat. of the fem. demonstr. pron.—So sucht, &c., 'she has recourse.'

l. 1803. Altverjährt, here 'prescriptive,' 'vested,' i.e. a property hallowed by long enjoyment.

† *The preceding versions* had: Und Tantal horcht in seiner Höhle.

Dritter Auftritt.

l. 1806. Goethe uses the verb erzählen with the prep. an before proper names, in higher diction only.

l. 1807. Weiter is here used in the sense of 'more fully.'

l. 1808. It would seem that Iphigenia represents the delay which has been caused, as the result of a divine dispensation.

l. 1810. Iphigenia represents the intended offering as a 'cruel resolution,' in accordance with her own conception of human sacrifices. Cp. l. 522, &c.

l. 1811. The accent is to be placed in this line on du, the meaning being that the king should not have come himself.

l. 1813, &c. The eagerness with which hirelings take upon themselves for favour and reward, half of the share in the guilt, is in German emphatically pointed out by the expression fassen, lit. 'to snatch;' 'to seize.'

l. 1815. Doch seine, &c. i.e. the king himself remains personally free from defilement.

ll. 1816–20. The tenour of these lines betrays a touch of the 'Titanic' feeling which had been aroused in Iphigenia by the contemplation of her undeserved sufferings. (Cp. l. 1712, &c. and *notes*). She likens the absolutely ruling king to the 'cloud-gatherer' (*νεφεληγερέτα*), 'high-thundering' (*ὑψιβρεμέτης*), and 'lightning-hurling (*ἀστεροπητής*) Zeus;' for, like him, he plans death in gloomy clouds, and whilst his messengers flash down destruction on the head of poor mortals, he calmly moves through his heights, amidst the storm, like an unapproachable god.—Cp. l. 1745, &c.

The line Und seine Boten, &c., contains a Biblical reminiscence.

l. 1821. The verb tönt, which is here used transitively, may be rendered by 'utters.'

The king's remark shows that he properly judges the import of the words 'uttered' by Iphigenia, which are directed against the arbitrary doings of the mighty.

l. 1822. The king having reminded Iphigenia of her sacred office, she replies that it is not the priestess who stands before him, but the daughter of Agamemnon.

l. 1823. The king had respected her words, while she was yet unknown to him, by discontinuing the human sacrifices.

l. 1824. Rasch is here used in the sense of ungestüm.

l. 1827. Und folgsam, &c. In readily fulfilling the duty of obedience, first towards her parents and then towards a divine will, Iphigenia enjoyed the feeling of sweetest freedom. The P. V. had: Und diese Folgsamkeit ist einer Seele schönste Freiheit.

l. 1830. Dort, i.e. in her parental home.

l. 1831. Cp. ll. 506–10.

l. 1832, &c. Iphigenia is, of course, aware of the fact that the king is prompted by passion only in his resolution to sacrifice the strangers. Cp. ll. 496, 1465, &c.

l. 1834. The law of hospitality was, with the ancients, one of the oldest and most sacred rights. (Cp. Od. ix. l. 270, &c.)

l. 1835. The brevity of this line indicates the emotion of the speaker.

l. 1840. Cp. the lines of Sophocles (El. 212, &c.):

τὰ δὲ τοῖς δυνατοῖς
οὐκ ἐριστὰ πλάθειν.

i.e. 'one must not quarrel with those who are more powerful, so as to attack and provoke them.' (Cp. Wunder, Engl. Ed.)

l. 1841, &c. Whether Iphigenia speaks or not, the king could always discern what her immutable feelings are. The repetition of the adv. immer by no means offends the ear so much as to induce us to put it down—according to some commentators—as an error or misprint. It rather makes the assertion emphatic.

l. 1843, &c. Even a hardened heart is melted to pity by the remembrance of a common doom, and how much the more must this be the case with Iphigenia, who is imbued with feelings of compassion.

l. 1848. Zuckt schon, 'was already raised.'—The verb zucken when applied to weapons, denotes 'to raise,' or 'draw' with a quivering motion.

l. 1850. Miss Swanwick happily translates this line by:

'A dizzy horror overwhelm'd my soul.'

l. 1854. Du weißt es, i. e. that we are bound to render to the distressed the benefits received from the gods.

l. 1857. Sich freuen is here used in the sense of 'to triumph over.'

l. 1862. Die Rechte, &c., 'the innate rights of his heart,' i. e. the rights of humanity.

l. 1866. Das Loos, &c., 'the chance of arms is changeable.'

l. 1868, &c. These lines will perhaps be best construed as follows: Auch den Schwachen hat die Natur gegen Trutz und Härte nicht ohne Hülfe gelassen.

l. 1870. Sie gab, &c., 'she makes him delight in cunning.'

l. 1871. Bald weicht, &c., i. e. the weak practise various stratagems: either they elude, delay, or evade the commands they have received.

Iphigenia, who had gradually begun to disclose indirectly her secret in lines 1862 and 1863, by alluding to the presence of

her brother, now does so unconsciously in a more direct manner, which, according to l. 1875, is fully understood by Thoas.

l. 1874. The pron. ſie refers to Liſt.

l. 1876, &c. The soul of Iphigenia struggles to ward off at the outset the evil fate—i. e. the commission of a wrong—which threatens to overcome her.

l. 1880. The ancients used to hold in their hands olive or laurel boughs, bedecked with wool, when they came as suppliants or petitioners. Here the prayer itself is metaphorically called 'the lovely branch.'

l. 1883. Mein Inn'res, &c., i. e. her innate right of freedom. Cp. l. 1862 and *note*.

l. 1884, &c. Having before been miraculously rescued by Diana, it is natural that Iphigenia should now think, in her distress, of invoking the aid of the goddess; but at the same time she asks herself, whether she has no resource in her own heart to extricate herself from the embarrassing position.

l. 1889. The first impulse of Iphigenia was to declare who the two strangers were—but then she recollects the danger in which she would place them by such a declaration; hence her hesitation,—indicated by the various expressions and the irregular metre—which is perfectly natural and quite consistent with the conflict between feeling and duty in the heart of the speaker.

l. 1890. Wohl is here used in the sense of 'probably.'

ll. 1892–1936. In the following speech, which is one of the grandest in the drama, Iphigenia asks herself whether man alone has the privilege of performing heroic and unheard of deeds? Whether achievements of physical prowess and daring alone can be called glorious and deserve admiration, and whether there remains nothing great for woman to perform, except by vying with man in the accomplishment of savage and heroic feats? She then arrives within herself at the conclusion that for woman too the path of heroism is open by acknowledging the truth even at the risk of sacrificing her life and that of her beloved ones; and finally she discloses the plot to the king.

l. 1895, &c. The performances undertaken by the valorous with improbable success are so stirring and affect so deeply even the narrator himself, that they 'shuddering uplift his soul,' although he has recited them again and again.

The above is an allusion to the 'wandering epic singers' who used, in ancient times, to recite the deeds of the heroes. Cp. l. 681, &c.

ll. 1898–1904. This passage alludes to the capture of the horses of king Rhesus before the Trojan camp, by Diomedes and Odysseus, as related in the tenth Book of the Iliad. Euripides treated that occurrence in his tragedy 'Rhesus.'

Wie unversehen, &c., i.e. he furiously attacks those who are still sleeping or just awaking, like a sudden unexpected fire.

ll. 1904–7. These lines allude to heroic deeds, such as were performed by Theseus, who, on proceeding from Troezen to Athens, went by land—over cliffs, and through mountain-forests—to clear the road from robbers. Cp. ll. 667–72, and *notes*.

l. 1911, &c. The clause und—rächen does not refer to the Amazons, but to Weib (l. 1908). The Amazons did not bloodily avenge any oppression, and the Lemnian women, who are said to have done so, did not belong to the Amazons proper.

l. 1912, &c. Auf und ab steigt, 'moves up and down'; 'vibrates through'; 'revolves.'

l. 1916, &c. It must be assumed that the following invocation is addressed to the gods. Cp. l. 1215, and *note*.

The phrase: Etwas Jemand auf die Knie legen, for 'to leave anything to the decision of another,' is Homeric. Cp. *ἀλλ' ἤτοι μὲν ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κεῖται* (Il. xvii. 514, &c.).

ll. 1917–19. Iphigenia implores the gods—if they are truthful—to glorify through her conduct the power of truth, and then, strengthened, as it were, by this prayer, she reveals to the king the plot which had been laid.

l. 1929, &c. The wording of the oracle is here given as interpreted by Orestes and Pylades.

l. 1934. It is very natural that Iphigenia should, in her great agitation, think of herself and Orestes as the only remnants of the house of Tantalus.

l. 1936, &c. These lines contain somewhat of a repetition of a former remark of Thoas. Cp. ll. 495, 499–501.

ll. 1939–41. Truth and humanity are universal qualities, and everyone, born under any clime, can hear their voice, if the stream of life flows through his heart pure and evenly, i.e. if his feelings are not disturbed by passion.

l. 1942, &c. The silence of the king, which is indicated by the pause after fließt, induced Iphigenia to ask him what fate he is planning for her in his inmost soul. The pron. mir does not refer to her fate alone, but also to that of Orestes and Pylades.

l. 1944. The metre of this line is not quite regular, the *second foot* consisting of an amphibrach; but it is quite

adapted to the agitated state of the speaker, and may almost be said to consist of two short lines.

l. 1947, &c. Uebereilt vorsätzlich, 'through my rash resolve.'

ll. 1953–56. Thoas feels now that Iphigenia fully believes the strangers, but he suspects that the impostors have, cunningly devising, thrown a web of falsehood round the head of the priestess, who had so long led a secluded life, but who now easily and readily gives credence to her own wishes.

l. 1957. Iphigenia modestly acknowledges that she could, in her simplicity, be deceived; but the two strangers are incapable of deception.

l. 1959. So laß sie fallen, i.e. let them perish as sacrifices.

l. 1961. Klippeninsel, 'rocky island.'

l. 1965. Cp. for the form Frauen, *note* to l. 966.

In the following lines Iphigenia completes briefly the account of the fate of her house, in order to bring forward her reasons for praying the king to allow both Orestes and herself to return to Mycenæ. Cp. ll. 1699–1702.

l. 1970. The form of address here employed is very effective. First Iphigenia expresses her firm conviction that the king will keep his promise to her, and then she describes in what that promise consisted. The reverse form would have been commonplace.

l. 1971, &c. Cp. ll. 290–94.

l. 1974, &c. Den . . . entferne, 'get rid of;' 'release himself from.'

l. 1976. Den er nicht hofft, i.e. which he hopes will never occur.

l. 1978. Den Harrenden, the expectant petitioner.

l. 1979, &c. The adv. unwillig, 'angrily,' refers to der Zorn, here 'my wrath.'

Gischend is here used in the sense of zischend.

ll. 1983–85. Iphigenia, who has perceived from the tenour of the king's last speech, that he is beginning to yield, implores him not to allow the flame of his wrath to destroy his humane feelings, but to let mercy shine upon her like the calm and sacred flame of the altar, which is surrounded by hymns of praise, gratitude and joy[1].

[1] The extreme difficulty of the above passage may be inferred from the circumstance, that nearly every translator or commentator has put a different meaning in it. I have been guided in my explanation by the Prose Versions, which ran: O laß die Gnade, wie eine schöne Flamme des Altars umkränzt von Lobgesang und Freude lodern.

l. 1986. Cp. l. 1800, and *note*.

l. 1990. Thoas avers that reflection is also needed for doing good, as the latter may perchance engender evil consequences.

ll. 1991–2. It is through 'hesitation' that good is turned into evil, since a good action performed too late may yield an evil result. Iphigenia's appeal to the king not to deliberate, but act only according to the promptings of his heart, is quite in accordance with her own mode of action. Cp. l. 1650.

Vierter Auftritt.

l. 1993, &c. It must be assumed that the companions of Orestes and Pylades had been 'discovered' by Arkas and his followers, and that Orestes hastened to the temple in order to save his sister.

l. 2001. The injunction: 'command your warriors to pause in their struggle,' is, of course, addressed both to the king and Orestes.

Fünfter Auftritt.

l. 2013, &c. The crew had not been routed by the king's soldiers, and they retreated slowly and in good order to their ship, and so Pylades thought that there was no impediment to their rescue.

l. 2016. It shows the discernment of Pylades, that he at once recognised the king by the majesty of his look.

l. 2018, &c. Gleich ist, &c. This refers to the followers of Orestes and Pylades, whose temerity will soon be punished; for they retreat already and will be destroyed.

l. 2025. Harret still, 'await calmly.'

Sechster Auftritt.

l. 2041, &c. Having implored the gods to grant him not only the courage, strength, and success of his father, but also a more beautiful death, he thinks the time has come to try his valour in a deadly struggle[1].

[1] Mr. W. Taylor (of Norwich) considers it necessary to defend the poet by appending to the above passage the following note in his translation: 'Strabo says of the dispute concerning the possession of Eleia, which was settled by single combat, that it was determined *κατὰ ἔθος τι παλαιὸν τῶν Ἑλλήνων*, b. viii, p. 357. So that this defiance is not a Gothic *and misplaced idea*, as a foreign critic would insinuate.'

ll. 2048–49. These two lines contain a general remark, viz. by imitating the great deeds of a ruler, a whole people consecrates them into a law. The subjects imitate the noble actions of their king, and thus they become law by custom.

l. 2055. The glance of kindness is called 'rapid,' because it speedily discerns the want of the sufferer.

l. 2062. Dem Feinde stehen, 'to make a stand against the enemy.'

l. 2068. The construction Er falle gleich, for wenn er auch (even if he should) falle, could be used in poetry only.

Cp. l. 28, and *note*.

l. 2070. Der überbliebnen, 'of the surviving.'

l. 2072. Durchgeweinten, 'spent in weeping.'—Durchweinen may be used as a separable and an inseparable comp. verb. The P. V. had von tausend durchweinten Tagen und Nächten. The elision of the plural term en, adopted by Goethe in the last version, would be permitted in poetical diction only.

l. 2074, &c. Vergebens sich, &c. 'in vain mournfully yearns (bangt) to call back . . . and pines away.'

l. 2077. Daß der Betrug nicht, poet. inversion for: daß nicht der Betrug.

l. 2079. Fleißig is here used in the sense of 'assiduously'; 'carefully.'

ll. 2082-86. The incident related in these lines, viz. that Orestes was born with 'a mark as of three stars' on his right hand—which circumstance the priest at once interpreted to indicate that he will perform a dreadful deed with the same hand—has been introduced by Goethe as one of the most natural signs of recognition.

ll. 2087–91. The sign mentioned in these lines has been partially borrowed by Goethe from Euripides, who makes in *Electra* (l. 573, &c.), an old servant of the Atridae recognise Orestes by 'an old scar on his forehead, which was the trace of a bleeding wound he received from a fall while pursuing with Electra a hind in his father's house.'

οὐλὴν παρ' ὀφρὺν ἥν ποτ' ἐν πατρὸς δόμοις
νεβρὸν διώκων σοῦ μέθ' ᾑμάχθη πεσών.

l. 2089. The tragic poets represent the character of Electra as very energetic and somewhat impetuous.

l. 2092. Die Aehnlichkeit des Vaters = die Aehnlichkeit mit dem Vater.

l. 2094. Als Zeugen, &c., i. e. as testimonies of her assurances.

l. 2097. Thoas does not allude here to the 'single combat' proposed by Orestes, but a contest in general between his soldiers and the crew.

ll. 2102–6. These lines contain a reproach and a taunt. Thoas alludes in the first instance to the expedition of the Argonautes in search of the 'golden Fleece'—then to the horses captured by Hercules at the command of Eurystheus, and finally to Medea, Ariadne, &c. The Greeks were, of course, not always successful in other rapacious enterprises.

l. 2107, &c. When Orestes perceives the strong resistance of Thoas to give up the image of the goddess, and sees besides the impossibility of obtaining possession of it except by force of arms, it occurs to him that the words of the oracle speaking of 'a sister who dwells against her will on the shores of Tauris' cannot refer to the image of Diana, but pointed to his own sister.

l. 2115. Löset sich, lit. 'will be dissolved;' i. e. 'will disappear,' or 'terminate.'

l. 2117. Mark the use of the verb gedenken with the accusative in the sense of 'to mean anyone'; 'to have anyone in view.' The P. V. had: und er verlangte dich.—Die strengen Bande, &c., i. e. the severe bonds in which Diana held Iphigenia at Tauris (cp. l. 35, &c.), are now loosened.

l. 2119, &c. The following lines describe the beneficial influence exercised on Orestes by the presence of Iphigenia—such as he had expected only from the possession of the image of Diana.

l. 2122, &c. Und schüttelte, &c., 'and terribly shook me to the inmost core.' The sufferings of Orestes had reached their climax after he had met his sister, and then followed his recovery. Cp. Sc. 1 of Act III.

Dann entfloh's, &c. This is an allusion to the flight of the furies to the dark depths of Tartarus.

l. 2124, &c. Neu genieß ich, &c., i. e. life now lay before him in all its brightness.

Rath in l. 2027, stands for Rathschluß, 'decree.' The latter expression occurred in the first versions.

ll. 2127–29. These lines contain an allusion to the Palladia, or images of Pallas Athena, which were kept hidden and secret, and considered as a kind of safeguard of the town where they were concealed. The most celebrated of those images was the Trojan Palladium, which had to be carried off by Odysseus and Diomedes before it was possible to take the city, 'the immutable fate of which was attached to the possession of the sacred image by a mysterious divine decree.'

l. 2130. Die Schützerin refers to dich, and not to the preceding *sie.*

l. 2131. In einer, &c., 'in holy stillness;' i. e. like the Palladia,

which used to be kept hidden and secret. Lines 2133 and 2134 are also addressed to Iphigenia.

l. 2138. Entsühnten Halle, 'redeemed abode.'

l. 2139. The emblem of royal sovereignty was with the ancient Greeks the sceptre only, and later the 'diadema,' or ornamented fillet encircling the head. Goethe uses here, however, the word Krone as the more poetical emblem of royal power.

l. 2140. Cp. ll 279-83.

ll. 2142-45. These four lines give the clue to the moral of the drama. Cp. *Critical Introduction.*

l. 2151, &c. Iphigenia cannot content herself with the abruptly given permission 'to go,' which indicates that the king was still harbouring towards her an angry feeling.

l. 2153, &c. In imploring the king that the bond of hospitality may henceforth unite him and his people with her house, Iphigenia wishes also to perpetuate the more humane manners she introduced among the Taurians.

l. 2161, &c. The Scythians wore skins or leather garments, and were armed with bows and arrows. The following description of the promised hospitable reception contains several Homeric reminiscences.

l. 2170. Iphigenia considers it as a favourable omen for the voyage, when a friendly word of farewell has been addressed to those who part, and their tears flow more soothingly from their eyes.

Iphigenia had first asked the king's blessing for herself (l. 2151, &c.), but then she prayed him to turn to her and Orestes (l. 2168); and Thoas, to show his reconciliation, bids farewell to both of them.

LIST OF QUOTATIONS FROM GOETHE'S IPHIGENIE.

1. Kann uns zum Vaterland die Fremde werden? l. 76.
2. Dank habt ihr stets. l. 93.
3. Frei athmen macht das Leben nicht allein. l. 106.
4. Ein unnütz Leben ist ein früher Tod. l. 115.
5. Das Wenige verschwindet leicht dem Blick,
   Der vorwärts sieht, wie viel noch übrig bleibt. ll. 144–45.
6. Ein edler Mann wird durch ein gutes Wort
   Der Frauen weit geführt. l. 213, &c.
7. Du sprichst ein großes Wort gelassen aus. l. 307.
8. Wohl dem, der seiner Väter gern gedenkt. l. 351.
9. Man spricht vergebens viel, um zu versagen;
   Der Andre hört von Allem nur das Nein. ll. 450–51.
10. Der Erde schöner, grüner Teppich soll
    Kein Tummelplatz für Larven sein. ll. 587–88.
11. Wohl uns, daß es ein Weib ist! l. 786.
12. Allein zu tragen dieses Glück und Elend
    Vermag ich nicht. l. 1255, &c.
13. Oft wird der Mächtige zum Schein gefragt. l. 1447.
14. Erdringe nicht, was ich versagen sollte. l. 1448.
15. Dir scheint es möglich, weil der Wunsch dich trügt. l. 1460.
16. Wer keine Neigung fühlt, dem mangelt es
    An einem Worte der Entschuld'gung nie. ll. 1497–98.
17. Betrüglich schloß die Furcht mit der Gefahr
    Ein enges Bündniß; beide sind Gesellen. ll. 1638–39.
18. Um Gut's zu thun, braucht's keiner Ueberlegung. l. 1989.

January, 1880.

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